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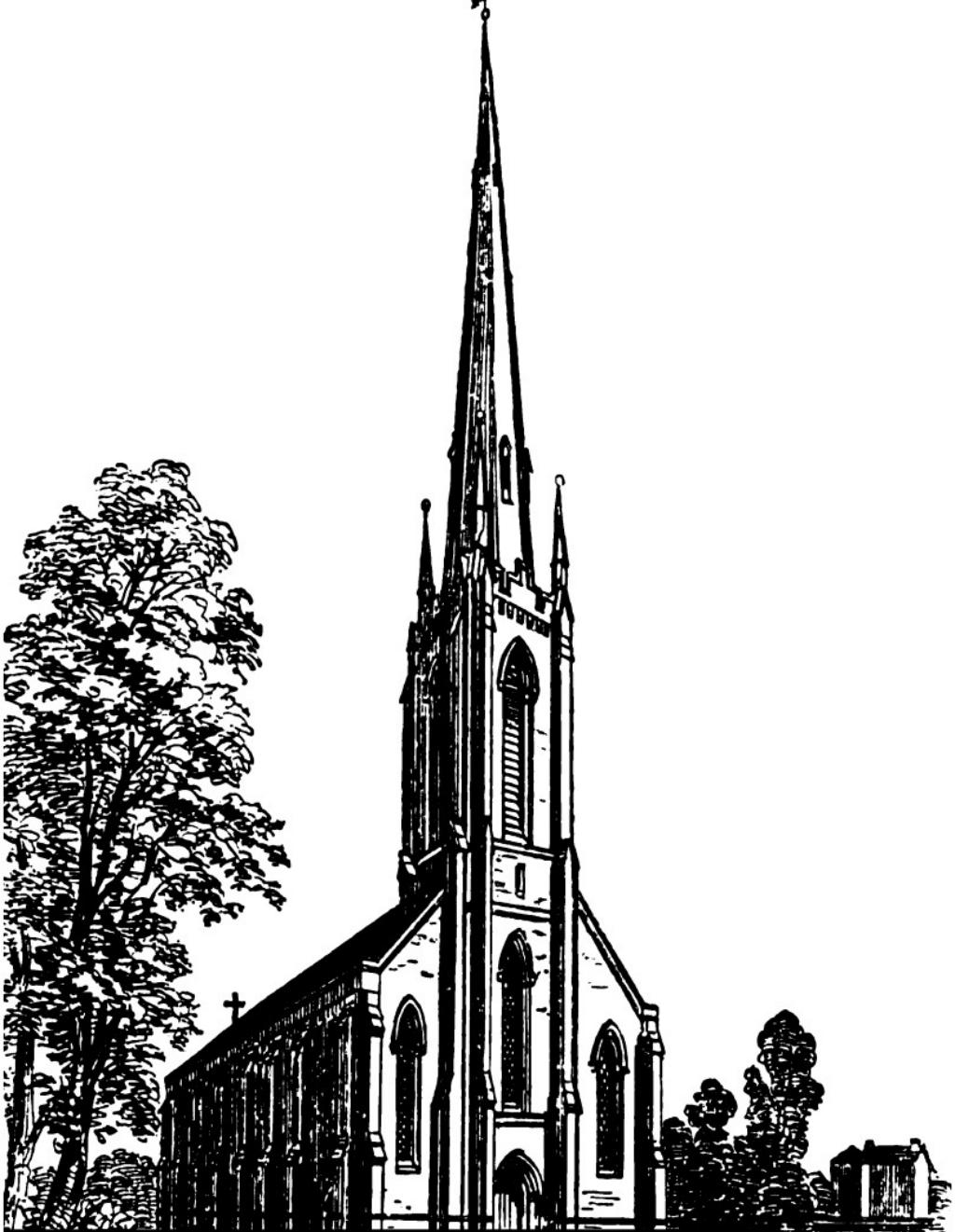
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*The History and Description of  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch; with Excursions in the ...*

Ashby de la Zouch, Edward Mammatt

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Leicester.

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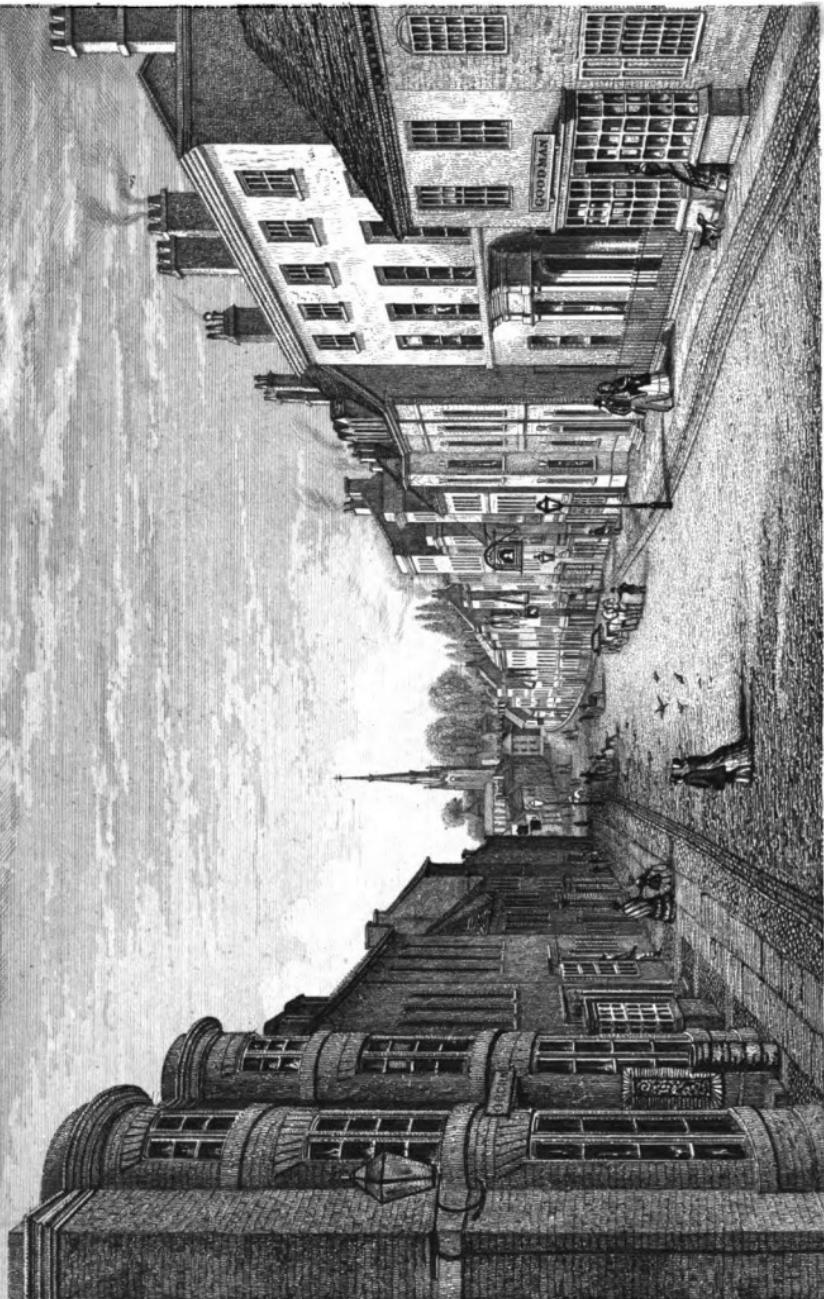






ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.  
MARKET STREET.

Gregory del



THE  
HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION  
OF  
Ashby-de-la-Zouch;  
WITH  
EXCURSIONS IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD.



The Huntington Arms.

ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH: W. & J. HEXTALL.  
LONDON:  
HALL & CO. 25, PATERNOSTER ROW.

1852.



IN submitting the present little Work to the notice of the public, the Publishers feel called upon to acknowledge the valuable assistance which has been rendered in producing it. It may perhaps be said to have originated with Mr. James Thompson, the author of the History of Leicester, who, in collecting materials for that work, discovered among the long-hidden manuscripts in the Corporation archives of that town, many interesting and valuable papers relating to Ashby and its Castle. Mr. Thompson has not only furnished the substance of those papers, but a variety of other equally important matters also, which are interspersed throughout the volume.

The Manuscript History of the Hastings Family, in the Library at Donington Hall, was politely offered and has been freely used.

Sir Charles Abney Hastings, Bart., supplied many interesting contributions.

To W. Dewes, Esq., the reader is indebted for the chapter on the Grammar School, and for much other information which has been derived from the abundant stores in his office.

Matthew H. Bloxam, Esq., and the Rev. J. M. Gresley, have been valuable contributors.

The Excursions round Ashby are written by Edward Mammatt, Esq., and to the stranger especially they will be found an useful and entertaining appendage to the work.

It would have been easy to have extended the volume to much larger dimensions; but the desire has been to keep it within its present limits.



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## HISTORY OF ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH,

*&c. &c.*

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### CHAPTER I.

PRIMITIVE CONDITION OF THE COUNTRY AROUND ASHBY—ORIGIN OF THE NAME OF THE TOWN—ITS CONDITION IN THE REIGN OF EDWARD THE CONFESSOR AND AT THE TIME OF THE NORMAN CONQUEST—ITS LORDS OF THE MANOR: PHILIP DE BEAUMEIS, AND THE FAMILY OF THE ZOUCHES—THE “GENTLE PASSAGES OF ARMS”—ORIGIN OF THE FAIRS AND MARKETS—THE CONFLICT BETWEEN EUDO LA ZOUCH AND ROGER BELLER, AT REARSBY—THE EXTINCTION OF THE ZOUCH FAMILY.

At the extreme western verge of the county of Leicester, where it unites with the shires of Warwick and Derby, the country, when other parts were peopled by the Romans and the Roman Britons, was almost entirely unknown. Perhaps some wandering party occasionally traversed it, or it might have witnessed the “stately march” of a Roman legion; but at all other times the wild animals browsed on its wolds, and took shelter among its woods. When, however, the descendants of Hengist and Horsa drove away from the Midlands their ancient population, and divided among themselves the acres which before then had had no other proprietor than the Author of Nature himself, each district of Mercia—nearly the last kingdom that was appropriated, probably—became the property of some bold Saxon rover or Danish sea-king. These districts were again parcelled up

into plots (comprising a few or many thousand acres) among the leading and trusty followers of each chieftain. When possession had been completely obtained of these smaller territories, the owners of them fenced out their lands with stockades, and then erected for themselves in the centre a dwelling place, usually consisting of a large square area, guarded by a moat, and including, besides the house of the proprietor, stables for his serfs and horses, with sheds for his sheep and cattle.

Such was the origin of our *tuns* or towns, our *bys* or abodes, and our *hams* or hamlets. And it frequently happened that the first proprietor gave to them his own name: in other cases, some natural feature of the district was associated with the designation of the settlement. Where the wide-spreading oak grew thickly, were our *Oak-hams* and *Actons*, or *oak-tuns*; where the willow was found, were the *Willow-bys*; and where the ash tree flourished were *Ash-bys*, *Ash-tuns*, and *Ash-leys*. Now, in the locality to which we are about to direct the readers attention, situate midway between wold and forest, there was a pleasant but moderate elevation, known as the *Ash-by*, or habitation among the ash trees; and it is probable, owing to the derivation of the last syllable being Danish, that a settler of that race was the first owner. In which case its origin may be dated from the period when Hubba and Ingvar, the fierce leaders of the Northmen, subdued the people of this and the adjoining counties, in the ninth century.

At this time, and for nearly two centuries after, the land was in all probability cultivated by the Gurths and Beowulphs whom fiction has immortalized, and the ancestors or kinsmen of Cedric of Rotherwood—the Saxon franklin of “*Ivanhoe*”—may have been the lords of the domain; living on the spot in the rude state and hearty hospitality of ancient days. But of this we have no direct evidence. Ashby is not brought

under historical notice until the reign of Edward the Confessor; when the lordship is stated to have consisted of fourteen yardlands—about 560 acres,\* which was principally pasture ground, where sheep and cattle grazed; while herds of swine wandered among the neighbouring woods in search of acorns and beech-mast. A generation had scarcely passed away ere the honest franklin and his peaceful swains were reduced to one common condition of slavery by the imperious Normans. William the Conqueror had given this manor, with a multitude of others to Hugh de Grentemaisnel, one of his principal and most daring captains on the field of Hastings, and the latter had placed it in the hands of his nephew, Ivo, or John. When Domesday book was drawn up, the land in the lordship which had been under cultivation would employ ten ploughs; but only seven were then made use of. One of these, with two bondmen, was upon the lord's own land; the other six were in different hands. The population was composed of eight common labourers, who were irremovable from the soil, whom the Normans styled “villeins”; six others, who held small allotments on performing a certain quantity of labour at the plough yearly, for their landlord, who were known as “socmen”; and four cottagers, known as “bordars,” whose rent was paid in kind, such as eggs, poultry, and so forth. These serfs, small farmers, and cottiers, with their wives and families, would not probably number more than ninety or a hundred persons. Eighteen or twenty humble cottages, clustered round the landlord's dwelling (which, it may be assumed, stood where the Castle now rears its decaying turrets) constituted the village of Ashby, when Ivo was its lord; and near to it was a wood, a mile and four furlongs broad, sufficient for a hundred hogs. A priest is recorded to have been one among the inhabitants. A hall; the church, dedicated to St. Helen, a small and plain structure, consisting

\* Assuming each yardland to have consisted of 40 acres.

of a nave only ; with twenty cottages—was all that the eye of man rested on, in the latter part of the eleventh century, on the site where Ashby now extends itself. As soon as the morning sun woke the inhabitants from their slumbers, they were summoned to morning prayers by the priest ; in the day they toiled on the glebe where their forefathers had worked before them ; and the evening closed in with vespers. This was their life and their world.

The next we read of Ashby in history, after the entry in Domesday book, is that it fell into the possession of Robert de Beaumeis, a Norman of whom nothing appears to be known. One of his successors was Philip de Beaumeis, whose brother Richard, the last dean of the collegiate church of St. Alkmund, Shrewsbury, surrendered that church, with all its estates, to the use of some regular canons of the order of St. Augustine, who came from Dorchester, and settled in an abbey he formed in the wood of Lilleshull. To this abbey, Philip de Beaumeis granted the following charter,\* translated from the Latin copy of the original :—

“To his lord and dearest father, the venerable Roger, Bishop of Chester, as well as to others, prelates and the undernamed sons of holy mother church, Philip de Beaumeis wishes health in the Lord ! Let it be known to you, and to all other prelates and those named below, that in fraternal love I have granted and given in firm charity and perpetual possession, for the health of the souls of my father, mother, wife, ancestors, and children, the whole of the land which is contained between Watling-street and Merdiche, to found a church in honour of Holy Mary the mother of God, for the canons of the order of St. Augustine, (they having left the church of St. Peter at Dorchester), there regularly to serve God and Holy Mary, the same to be free from all secular services and

\* Between the years 1128 and 1149. The charter is given in Nichols's History of Leicestershire.

payments. I grant to them, also, the use of the neighbouring woods, as well to supply themselves with fire wood as with timber for the building of their dwellings. I have granted, also, the church of St. Helen of Ashby, with the church of Blackfordby, with sixty acres adjacent, and with their other appurtenances. I have also added in the same town of Ashby the whole land in my domain which is called Suartcliffe,\* and the land of Hakon, the shoemaker; and the tithe of my mills of the same town; and the tithe of my herds, namely, my mares and their colts; and the tithe of my pannage; and to be quit of pannage for their swine and for the use of my wood, as well for the fire as for their buildings. These, therefore, are witnesses of my gift and grant: Robert, Bishop of Hereford; Philip, son of Philip de Beaumeis (who is not only a witness but the founder and granter of the charity); the Lady Matilda, daughter of William Meschines, wife of Philip de Beaumeis; Herbert of the Castle; Hugh de Cuilli; Hugh de Say; Philip, the son of Otho, and Roger his brother; Roger D'Ewes; Robert the Clerk; and Walter of Ashby. Let your holiness in the Lord avail you! Amen."

Between the date of Domesday survey and this charter, fifty or sixty years had elapsed, during which the lordship had undergone several changes of proprietors; and it seems a shoemaker was among Philip de Beaumeis' tenants in Ashby. It is not impossible this charter was executed within the building which occupied the site of the Castle. The modern reader may figure to himself the group gathered within its walls around the learned clerk who indited the deed,—composed of the reverend bishop, the mailed baron, and the lady Matilda; Herbert the Castellan; the men-at-arms; the parish priest; and Walter, a townsman of Ashby.

Philip de Beaumeis left no male heir. His daughter,

\* In another charter this is described as lying between the way from Packington to Breedon, and divided by the wood.

Adeliza, married Alan la Zouch, of an ancient Breton family. Alan was a descendant of the Earls of Brittany, and son of Geoffrey, who, settling in England in the reign of Henry II., founded another family, and was hence called Geoffrey *de la Zouch*—the French word *zouch* meaning a stock, and the designation implying that he was the first of another stock. Such is the simple origin of the high-sounding appellative, which afterwards gave to Ashby the affix that distinguishes it from the other towns and villages bearing the same name; as Folville does to another of them in this county.

When the members of this family were lords of Ashby those chivalrous displays, the “Gentle Passages of Arms,” were sometimes witnessed in the neighbourhood. One of these has conferred an enduring fame upon the place; and, if we are to credit tradition, the spot where the tournament took place lies nearly a mile westward of the town, towards the village of Smisby. Here Nature has formed an amphitheatre almost perfect. A small plain occupies its centre—its sides are formed by gentle slopes—and at one extreme stands, on the high ground, the tower of the village church, commanding the prospect of the valley, and a view of the towers of Ashby Castle beyond the opposite extremity. From this church and the surrounding high ground, the Norman aristocracy and the Saxon gentry (the author of “Ivanhoe” informs us) watched the momentous conflict between the Templar and his gallant antagonist.

Under the auspices of the Zouches, Ashby emerged from the humbleness and lowliness of its original condition; for in the year 1219 it acquired a right to have a yearly fair and a weekly market. In the course of a century and a half after the time when the abodes of a few serfs and peasants alone stood near the Castle, other dwellings had sprung up: a small hostelry perchance, and a few tradesmen and artisans, being added to it, in consequence of the inmates of the Castle

needing their services, gave it a small degree of importance. Roger la Zouch, the son of Alan (already mentioned) agreed to give Henry III. a palfrey for the grant of a fair, to be held yearly on the eve and day of St. Helen—the patron saint of the church,—and of a market every week on Wednesday. The annual fair drew together Jew and merchant, shopkeeper and farmer, and was a time of joyous—probably rude and exuberant—excitement; when the travelling minstrel, the pilgrim, and the troubadour assembled around the hearth of the hostel, or in the open street of the town. On Wednesday in every week, squire, farmer, and peasant, from the quiet hamlets around Ashby, frequented the market, there to purchase what they could not obtain at home, and to sell the produce of their lands or labour.

The son and successor of Roger la Zouch was Alan, who was an eminent warrior. He espoused Helen, a daughter of Roger de Quincy, the celebrated Earl of Winchester. He was entrusted with the wardenship of the whole county of Chester and North Wales, at a time when the Welsh were always in open arms against the English; and he stood high in favour with Henry III. Having authority vested in him by that monarch, conjointly with others of the nobility, to convene a number of the proprietors of land in the country, in order to demand from them by what title they held their possessions, he sat in Westminster Hall for that purpose, his son, a young man of twenty-eight years of age, being also present. The question being put to John, Earl of Warren and Surrey, by the commissioners, suddenly drawing his sword he answered, “By this my grandfather held his lands, and with this I will keep them.” Alan la Zouch reproved the Earl for this reply, when he attacked the commissioner and his son with his weapon, and so severely wounded the former that he died about two years after from the injury he had sustained.

A few years before this date,\* the lord of Ashby procured a royal charter for the alteration of the day on which the market was held in the town, from Wednesday to Saturday.

Of Roger la Zouch† little appears to be known. He died in the year 1285, being then possessed of the manor of Ashby, which he held under the Earl of Winchester by the service of a knight's fee: he was, in other words, bound to provide a soldier, supplied with horse and armour, to do the bidding of that earl for forty days every year. This was the rent he paid for Ashby-de-la-Zouch to his superior lord. His son Alan was then eighteen years of age, and emulated his ancestors in warlike enterprise. He was one of the claimants of the crown of Scotland. He served under the banner of Edmund, Earl of Lancaster and Leicester, in the wars in Gascony, and with Roger le Bigod in Scotland. He died in the reign of Edward II., not having passed the middle term of life, and leaving no male heir.

This was the last of the Zouches in the male line who held the manor of Ashby. He gave it, on his decease, to Sir William Mortimer, whose maternal grandfather, William la Zouch, was brother of Alan, the baron already named as having confronted the Earl of Warren in Westminster Hall. Sir William Mortimer assumed the name of his distant kinsman in remembrance of the benefit he received from him, and gave his son Alan the same cognomen.

It were useless to trace out all the branches and connections of this family, which spread out in various directions; but one fact is worthy of notice in this place, relative to a brother of Alan la Zouch, named Eudo. A greedy and rapacious knight living at Kirby, one Roger Beler, or Beller, who was a justice itinerant, had offered grievous wrong to Eustace de Folville, of Ashby Folville, a neighbouring village. Tradition

\* May, 1261.

† The son of Alan and Helen, daughter of the Earl of Winchester.

states that a deadly feud arose between these men, and that, summoning to their aid friend, retainer, and vassal, they met in deadly conflict in a valley near Rearsby. Hour after hour did they wage war with sword, spear, bow and arrow. At last Roger Beller fell mortally wounded and Eustace de Folville was severely so. The former died almost immediately—the latter some time after. Among those who took part with de Folville, the victor, was Eudo la Zouch, who fled to France and died at Paris, an outlaw, about two years after the date of this remarkable battle. His son prayed parliament that the outlawry might be reversed, but of this nothing further is known. The ashes of the two knights now repose in quiet, in the churches of the villages of Kirby and Ashby, to which they gave their names. Their effigies even yet remain to tell the story of their feud. One lies, deprived of sword and dagger, by the side of Alice, his wife; the other is yet to be seen in the “chapel of Our Lady” at Ashby, and his helmet hangs over his sepulchre. The elder peasantry still tell of the fight that was fought between Beller and Folville on the soil, where now the voice of the peaceful husbandman, pursuing his daily avocations, alone is heard. Of the knights, we may say with the poet—

“Their forms are dust,  
Their good swords are rust;  
Their souls are with the saints, we trust!”

Alan la Zouch was one of the heroes of Crécy, and died (probably of his wounds) in the year in which that battle occurred. He was succeeded by his son, Hugh, whose name only serves as a link in the genealogical chain, connecting him with Hugh, his son, who was a knight under John of Gaunt, when that renowned noble conducted an expedition into Flanders. This, the last of the Zouches, obtained an exemplification of the grant for holding the Saturday market in Ashby. He died in the year 1399, leaving no heir.

Thus, after being holders of the manor for nearly two hundred years, the Zouches in the male and female branches became extinct. The property they had held in Ashby passed into the possession of Sir Hugh Burnell, who had married Joyce de Botelvart, a distant relative of Hugh, the last lord. Like others of his predecessors, this gentleman was the tenant of the family of Beaumont, for whom he found or did knightly service. Sir Hugh Burnell was not lord of Ashby more than twenty years, when he died, and then every trace of its ancient feudal proprietors disappeared.

Its next owner was James Butler, Earl of Ormond; but how it came into his hands is a matter of uncertainty. At this time the rival houses of York and Lancaster were dividing the nobility, knights, and gentry of England into two parties, who afterwards confronted each other in deadly conflict. The Earl of Ormond was a partisan of the reigning family, and had been especially honoured by Henry VI. After the battle of Towton Moor he was taken prisoner, and was beheaded at Newcastle in the year 1460.

## CHAPTER II.

THE FAMILY OF HASTINGS—WILLIAM, THE FIRST BARON, OBTAINS THE MANOR—HIS HISTORY—HE IMPARKS LAND AT ASHBY, BAGWORTH, AND KIRBY MUXLOE—ASHBY CASTLE A PALACE—THE CHURCH—TWO PAIRS GRANTED—FEUDAL STATE OF LORD HASTINGS—HIS PREMATURE AND MELANCHOLY END—EDWARD, LORD HASTINGS—GEORGE, THE FIRST EARL OF HUNTINGDON—FRANCIS, THE SECOND EARL—HIS HISTORY AND DEATH, AND BURIAL IN ASHBY CHURCH—THE LADY MARY HASTINGS AND THE GRAND DUKE OF RUSSIA—HENRY, THE THIRD EARL OF HUNTINGDON—LETTER FROM QUEEN ELIZABETH TO HIM—THE QUEEN'S JEALOUSY OF HIM—MARY, QUEEN OF SCOTS, AT ASHBY.

WE now approach an era in the history of the town, when it derived fame and importance from its connection with the ancient family of Hastings—when its castle was reared in stateliness over the foundations of an earlier building—and its church was restored, and in great part re-constructed, by the munificence of the new lord of the manor.

For a brief space we may here divert the current of our narrative, while we turn to the origin of the illustrious baron whose proud career and melancholy end are familiar to Englishmen, and who selected Ashby-de-la-Zouch as his favourite residence. William, Lord Hastings, was the eldest son of Sir Leonard Hastings, Knight, of Kirby Muxloe, who was one of the descendants of Robert de Hastings, the portreeve, or chief magistrate, of that place in the reign of William I., to whom he was also steward. Sir Leonard, and his son Sir William, were retainers of Richard, Duke of York, the father of Edward IV.; and rendered the Yorkist cause great service by the zealous devotion and active energy they showed in its promotion. It was during his youth that Edward

formed a friendly attachment to the son of his father's faithful servant; and as they were nearly of the same age, it may readily be conceived that this, with congeniality of disposition and early acquaintanceship, would form a strong tie between the prince and the hero of the story. As soon as Edward IV. ascended the throne he bestowed honour and conferred advantages upon his bosom friend. Sir William was then about thirty-two years of age, and united to personal beauty chivalrous character and courtly accomplishments. He was, no doubt, the boon companion of the young monarch in festive hours—his confidant in the graver affairs of life. Whether in battle array, in dalliance with the fair women of London (who did not turn aside from the gallant addresses of the popular young sovereign), or in deciding on the business of state, Edward was seldom without the society and help of his favourite friend.

In the year 1461 the king conferred the manor of Ashby-de-la-Zouch—previously the property of James, Earl of Ormond, who was attainted of high treason—upon Sir William, and, in consideration of his many eminent services, raised him to the dignity of baron of the realm. Besides Ashby-de-la-Zouch, other manors belonging to the Earl of Ormond were given to him. In consideration of the near alliance of his wife Katherine, to Richard Neville, Earl of Salisbury, he obtained a grant also of the manor, lordship, and castle of Belvoir, and the park and all its members. Favours were lavished upon him by the monarch, and by the high personages of the kingdom, while Charles, Duke of Burgundy, settled upon him 1,000 scutes (of the value of 48 groats each). Stewardships, places of honour, and lucrative offices were all placed in his hands: he was constituted steward of the honour of Leicester, and constable of its castle, besides being warden of all the parks, chases, and manors belonging to that honour. He was appointed ambassador, with the

Earl of Warwick, to treat for peace with the ambassador of Louis XI., King of France, when that sovereign presented him with a piece of plate of the value of ten thousand marks. Soon afterwards Louis gave him a pension of two thousand crowns per annum, which was regularly paid without any acquittance; for, on receiving the first payment in gold, he said, “Put it here into my sleeve; for other testimonial you shall get none: no man shall say that king Edward’s Lord Chamberlain hath been pensioner to the French king.”

Still, though a willing recipient of the gifts of a foreign monarch, there was no failing in his allegiance to the king and friend to whom he owed honour and wealth: on the contrary, he showed in the hour of trial that he was at once loyal, steadfast, and grateful; as when Edward, having fled the kingdom, had returned to Ravenspur, and was there sitting at dinner, news being brought that the Marquis of Montague—brother to the Earl of Warwick, the king’s enemy—was mounted on horseback and compelling his men to cry “King Henry,” Lord Hastings stood firm to the royal standard. He came to this county; summoned around him gentlemen, farmers, and burgesses; and met Edward at Leicester with 3,000 men—many of whom were with him on the field of Barnet, where the Earl of Warwick was slain and victory placed the crown securely on the head of king Edward.—One stain rests upon the reputation of Lord Hastings, if history speaks truly: he was one of those who despatched with their daggers the unfortunate prince Edward, the son of Henry VI., on his capture at Tewkesbury.

Services so distinguished—and we may add, in the last case, so unscrupulous—placed the favourite on the highest pinnacle of distinction which any subject could occupy. The royal grace had elevated and enriched him beyond measure—his own fidelity and bravery had strengthened him in his lofty position; he was a prince, and wanted a palace.

Even here he was not denied. The monarchs of England had, before that time, ever been chary of conceding, even to their noblest and most illustrious subjects, the privilege of erecting a castle, or castellated mansion; but to Lord Hastings—courtier, warrior, friend—nothing could be refused. King Edward, when at Nottingham, in April 1474, gave him a license to enclose and impark 3,000 acres of land and wood at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; 2,000 acres at Bagworth and Thornton; and 2,000 acres at Kirby Muxloe; and, in addition, a farther license to erect new houses, with lime and stone, at the places here named, to be surrounded with walls, to be strengthened by towers and bulwarks, to be surmounted by pinnacles, to be embattled, to be pierced with loopholes for defence, and to be girt above the towers and gateways with machicolations.

Then were reared those lofty turrets, of which the majestic relics now interest us so deeply; and the places, moated and fortified, at Bagworth and Kirby—the latter still reminding us of its pristine glory by means of its perishing fabric, the former long since shattered by the cannon of the Parliamentarians, and leaving only its ditch to tell us that it was once a stronghold.

Ashby Castle was erected, then, to serve as a palace and fort. In it were chambers necessary for men-at-arms, archers, and servants, with halls for its lord and his family and visitors. The principal tower, occupying the upper part of some sloping ground, was a kind of keep, yet scarcely so rude in its accommodation. Its foundations lay deep and massive in the ground. Its walls soared up to the clouds, pierced with many a loophole, and overhung by those treacherous parapets through which scalding water and molten lead might be showered on a besieging enemy. Near this was placed the Kitchen Tower, where Cyclopean fires were almost continually burning, and hosts of menials prepared the meals to

which an army of soldiers and retainers sat down daily. In its upper stories, in many a nook, the inhabitants of the castle found nightly shelter.

About the date of the erection of the castle the Church underwent great alterations, and received additions, most probably by the directions of the Lord of the manor. Its tower, its buttresses, its windows, and its chapels bear evidence of having been constructed at this time; nor is it unlikely that he felt under the necessity of doing "honour to God and our holy Mother Church," while he was ministering to his own pride and dignity in raising the adjoining walls.

On the 14th of November, 1474, Lord Hastings obtained a grant of two fairs to be held in Ashby—one on the eve of Pentecost (Whit-Sunday) and four days after; the other on the eve of the Apostles Simon and Jude (October 28th,) and four days after. The deed was witnessed by the Dukes of Clarence and Gloucester, and was executed in Westminster Palace.

The feudal system was now shining with a dying splendour. Heraldry was now in its pride. At this time William, Lord Hastings, went forth to foreign battle-field, to tournament, to court, and to the chase, amid all the blazonry and pomp of power. He was a petty sovereign. In his retinue were two lords, nine knights, fifty-eight esquires, and twenty gentlemen. Among these were the well-known names of Montfort, Harcourt, Chaworth, Danvers, Green, Sacheverell, Curzon, Neville, Palmer, Vernon, Shirley, Babington, Bassett, Turville, and others. When these knights and gentlemen were mounted and armed—invested in their surcoats of many colours, and bearing above their barred helmets their respective crests—and following their lord in his enterprises, they constituted a moving pageant of which in modern times only an imperfect notion can be formed.

This career of unwonted brilliancy was, however, destined to close in gloom and sadness. Upon the death of Edward, Lord Hastings's fortunes began to decline. Having been the confidant of that prince in his amours with Jane Shore, at the death of that monarch he is said to have taken her under his protection; and when the Duke of Gloucester, afterwards Richard III., sought a pretext for his death, this unfortunate woman was made instrumental in his destruction. Catesby attempting, in the presence of Hastings, to establish the claims of Richard to the throne, his Lordship declared, that "he would rather see the ruin of the Protector and his party, than that the children of the late king should be deprived of their right." With the most aggravating treachery this declaration was conveyed to Richard, who immediately resolved to despatch him. For this purpose he called a council in the Tower, at which he accused the Queen and Jane Shore of witchcraft, at the same time laying bare his shrivelled arm, which he said was reduced by their sorceries, although it was well known to have been in that state from his infancy. Lord Hastings made a slight objection to the evidence of guilt produced against the Queen and Jane Shore. This so exasperated the Protector, that he declared they had together conspired his death. After calling some soldiers into the room, he accused Lord Hastings of high treason; and added, "make haste and shrieve him quickly, for by St. Paul, I will not dine, till I see his head off." He was accordingly hurried to the green before the Tower chapel, where a log of wood was found upon which he was sternly commanded to lay his neck; after a short confession to a priest, who was accidentally present, his head was struck off.

His remains were interred in Windsor Chapel, where a splendid monument was erected to his memory. In his will, among a multitude of bequests, he ordered that a suit and vestments, with an altar-cloth, should be given to the Church

of Ashby, and the sum of £50 to find a priest, who should say daily mass therein for the good of his and others' souls. He also left bequests to the greater part of the religious houses in Leicester.

The heir of Lord Hastings was his eldest son Edward, who, at the date of his father's decease, was between seventeen and eighteen years of age. His mother therefore held his estates as executrix. It appears from a special grant under the sign manual and privy seal of Richard III., that this lady found some favour with that prince. If such a mind could be supposed to relent, we might imagine that this kindness was the result of compunction for his injustice and cruelty towards her husband, the Lord Hastings. The following is an extract from this grant: "First, we agree and grant to be good and gracious Sovereign Lord to the said Catherine and to her children, and servants, and to protect and defend the said Catherine as our well-beloved cousin and widow, and her children not suffering to be wronged," and so forth.

Edward, Lord Hastings, married Mary, the daughter and sole heiress of Thomas, Baron Hungerford, Botreaux, Molines, and Moels. He shared in the honours of Bosworth Field, and upon the accession of Henry VII., were restored to him, as well as those of his wife's father, all the estates of his father, William, Lord Hastings. His total income at this time was £1,598 11s. 8d.

This nobleman was sent to assist the Emperor Maximilian, against the French; and was the chief commander of the forces raised for suppressing the insurrection in Scotland. He died in 1506, and was buried in Blackfriar's Chapel.

The following year Lady Mary, his widow, manifested her esteem for Sir Richard Sacheverill, her late husband's receiver general, by giving him the manors Stoke Poges, Cyphenham, Fulmere, Eyton, Beckenton, Bonany, and others, for the term

of his life, requiring only the yearly rent of one *red rose*. In 1511, this munificence was followed by her marriage with him.

George Hastings, only son of the last lord, succeeded his father in the possession of this manor and castle. This nobleman was engaged in the expedition to France when Therouenne and Tournay were won, as appears by the list of "The names of the captaine and petty captaines, with the bagges in their standerts of aremy and vantgarde of the kinge's leffttenant, enteryng into France, sixteynth daye of June, in the fyfth yere of the reigne of kynge Henrye VIII.," in which the badges of this noble Lord are thus emblazoned : "the Lord Hastynge bayryth blew and bloukett, a bull's head sabull, raessed with a crowne about his necke; gold and three sykelles, and garbes golde."

In 1529, at York-Place (now Whitehall), he was advanced to the dignity of Earl of Huntingdon, in consideration of his many great and laudable services ; and on the same day his son Francis was summoned to parliament as Lord Hastings. It is said that the title of Huntingdon was conferred in consequence of his descent from a Henry Hastings, who married Ada, the daughter of David (grandson of David I., king of Scotland) who was created Earl of Huntingdon. He was one of the peers who subscribed the famous letter to Pope Clement VII., and sat on the trial of Queen Anna Boleyn. He died in the year 1543, and was buried in the chancel of the church at Stoke Pogeis.

Francis, second Earl of Huntingdon, was one of the Knights of the Bath, created two days before the coronation of Anna Boleyn, his father being then living. He carried St. Edward's staff at the coronation of Edward VI., and at the feast in Westminster Hall was one of the water-bearers to the king. In 1530 he was sent with considerable forces to dislodge the French, planted between Bologne and Calais, both of which

places were then in possession of the English; and on his return was instrumental in quelling the insurrection of Henry, Duke of Suffolk. Before the Duke's committal to the Tower the following letter was addressed by the Earl of Arundel to the Earl of Shrewsbury :

“The Duke of Suffolk is on fridaye stollen from his house at Shene, and roone away, with his two bretheren, into Lesystershire; for he was mett at Stoney Stratforde: my Lord Huntingdon is goone into thosse parts after hym, with.....agaynst him.”

At this time the Duke had about fifty men with him, but hearing that the Earl of Huntingdon was come from the queen with a body of horse to seize him, and knowing that it would be in vain to make resistance with so small a party, he distributed his money among his attendants; and feigning a flight, committed his life to the sole fidelity of one Underwood, whom he had made his ranger at Astley. This fellow promised to conceal him, till he should have time to resolve upon some measure for his safety: but either actuated by fear, or the hopes of a reward, he delivered his master to Huntingdon, who brought him with a guard of two hundred horse to London, where he was imprisoned in the Tower.—Francis, Earl of Huntingdon was one of the peers who sat on the trial of Edward, Duke of Somerset. He married Catherine Pole, niece to Cardinal Pole, by whom he had six sons and five daughters. He died in the year 1560-1, and was buried at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. A magnificent tomb was erected to his memory, in the chapel on the south side of the chancel of the church.

It is related of the youngest daughter of this Earl, the lady Mary, that Juan Vassillivich, Grand Duke and Emperor of Russia, having heard of her being of the blood royal, began to “affect” her; “whereupon, making his desire known to Queen Elizabeth, (who did well approve thereof) he sent

over Theodore Pissemiskoie, a nobleman of great account, his ambassador; who, in the name of his master, offered great and advantageous terms to the Queen, in case the marriage took effect; and promised that the issue by this lady should inherit. The ambassador thus arriving in England, was magnificently entertained, and admitted audience. The Queen hereupon caused the lady to be attended by divers ladies and young noblemen, that so the ambassador might have a sight of her, which was accomplished in York House Garden, near Charing Cross, London. There was he, attended also with divers men of quality, brought before her: and casting down his countenance, fell prostrate before her. The lady, with the rest, admiring at his strange salutation, he said by an interpreter, ‘it sufficed him to behold the angelical presence of her whom he hoped should be his master’s spouse and empress;’ seeming ravished with her angelical countenance, state, and beauty. She was, after that, by her friends in court, called Empress of Moscovia. But the Queen, as well as the young lady, understanding (according to the laws of those countries) he might put away his wife when he pleased, took occasion to *put a stop to that overture.*”

Henry, the third Earl of Huntingdon, when twenty-six years of age, succeeded to his father’s titles and estates. The following year he presented to Queen Elizabeth, in angels, £15 in a red silk purse; his countess in a similar purse £10, in demi-angels; and the lady, his mother, in semi-sovereigns, £10 in a similar purse. In return the earl received a gilt cup with a cover, weighing  $34\frac{3}{4}$  ounces; his countess a like cup, weighing 37 ounces; and the dowager countess another, weighing  $18\frac{3}{4}$  ounces. In 1562 he received the following mandate from Queen Elizabeth, requiring his presence with that of his lady, at an interview between the English and Scottish Queens:

“Elizabeth R.

“Right trusty and right well-beloved cowsen, we greete yow well. Forasmuch as a meeting and interview betwixt us and our good sister and cowsen, the Queene of Scotts, hath beene of long tyme motioned to be had some tyme this summer; which as we are accorded, shall take effect about Bartholemew-tide next, eyther at our citty of Yorke, or some other convenient place on this side neere unto Trent; we, meaning to have yow there, to attend upon us, as is meet for the degree and place which yow hold, do will and require yow to put yourselfe, our cowsen your wife, and your trains to attend on yow both, being so many in number as at least twenty-six of them may remain to attend upon yow both, about our court, and be ready to meet us on the way neere unto Trent, at such place and day of the month of August next, as shall be signified to yow by our chamberlayn, or some others of the Councell, at the furthest, before the midst of July; forseeing that the array of yourself, your wife, and your trains may be according to the best of your states and degrees, and meetest for the honour and presence of such an interview.

“Yeiven under our signets, at our manour of Greenwiche, the 16th of June, in the fourth yere of our reigne.”

This Earl's supposed title to the crown, by descent from the Duke of Clarence, was soon afterwards a subject of conversation, and became a source of uneasiness to him. The Queen's extreme jealousy with respect to her succession, is well known, and began to shew itself in marks of displeasure to this nobleman, who was far from presuming upon his right. In a letter to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, Lord Huntingdon says,

“My honourable good Lord,

“I am sorry that my present disease is such as there are left me but these two remydies, either

to swallow up those bitter pills lately received, or to make you a partner in my griefs, thereby something to ease a wounded heart. At my wife's last being at court to do her duty as became her, it pleased her majesty to give her a privy nippe concerning myself, whereby I perceive she hath some jealous conceit of me, &c. What grief it hath congealed in my poor heart (but ever true) let your Lordship judge, whose prince's favour was allways more dear unto me than all other felicities whatever. . . . . .

The cloud which thus appeared to be gathering over him passed away, and he seems to have been completely restored to Elizabeth's favour. In September 1569 he was appointed, in connexion with the Earls of Shrewsbury and Hereford, to guard the unfortunate Queen of Scots.

A letter of this date is extant, in which the Earl of Shrewsbury writes to Lord Huntingdon, desiring that he will visit him at Wingfield, in order to their consulting together, with the Earl of Hereford, for the safe custody of the Queen of Scots. What the immediate issue of the conference was does not now appear; but it seems that she was shortly after at Tutbury, and while on her way from that place to Coventry, stopped at Ashby Castle, in the last week of November 1569.

The Earl purchased a mansion in Leicester, called the "Lord's Place," which became the resort of many Puritan preachers, of whose party he was a zealous supporter. It is said he much impaired his fortune by the liberal aid he rendered them. He took a constant and lively interest in the affairs of the Corporation of Leicester, to whom he addressed many letters, dated from Ashby-de-la-Zouch, still in existence. He was one of the peers, who sat on the trial of the Queen of Scots, and in 1572 gave notice of the plot for liberating the royal captive. In the same year he was appointed Lord President of the North: several letters written

while he held this office are still preserved in the British Museum. He died in the year 1595, and was interred at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. The charges of his funeral, which was honourably solemnized (by the Queen's command) amounted to £1392 15s. 0d.

### CHAPTER III.

GEORGE, THE FOURTH EARL OF HUNTINGDON—MR. BAINBRIGG'S LETTER TO THE EARL OF SHREWSBURY—VISIT OF QUEEN ANN AND PRINCE HENRY TO THE CASTLE—SIR HENRY HASTINGS, THE “FINE OLD ENGLISH GENTLEMAN”—HENRY, THE FIFTH EARL OF HUNTINGDON—HIS HOUSEHOLD REGULATIONS—HIS CHARGES FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF HIS HOUSE—THEATRICAL PERFORMANCES AT THE CASTLE IN THE YEAR 1606—LETTER OF THE COUNTESS TO THE EARL—JAMES THE FIRST'S VISIT TO THE CASTLE—LICENSE TO HOLD FAIRS IN ASHBY—OPENING OF THE CIVIL WAR IN THE NEIGHBOURHOOD—THE RIVAL LEADERS, GREY AND HASTINGS—THE FORTIFICATION OF ASHBY CASTLE—THE CHARACTER OF THE GARRISON—MILITARY OCCURRENCES OF THE YEARS 1644 AND 1645—THE GARRISONS OF COLE-ORTON AND ASHBY—CHARLES THE FIRST STAYS AT ASHBY ON HIS FLIGHT FROM NASEBY—ASHBY SURPRISED BY THE PARLIAMENTARIANS FROM LEICESTER—SURRENDER OF THE CASTLE TO COLONEL NEEDHAM—IT IS DISMANTLED BY BAINBRIGG OF LOCKINGTON.

DURING the century over which the events related in the preceding pages extended, others more or less noticed were gradually taking place. The people then abandoned the Roman Catholic for the Protestant religion; the feudal system had been shaken to its centre, for, as Hume informs us, “before the end of Elizabeth the distinction of villein and freeman was totally though insensibly abolished;” and in every market town of any importance wealth had increased while the population multiplied. With the constant residence of so potent a family as that of the Earl of Huntingdon, and the holding of its markets and fairs, Ashby would necessarily acquire a *status* among other towns, considerable and relatively important. Its inhabitants were, besides, no longer serfs and unthinking traders. The Castle walls were not needed as a shelter to the town: though its owners and in-dwellers yielded

their patronage to the townspeople. The completion of the work of religious Reformation, and the free and general persual of the Scriptures, gave a stimulus to the reflective powers of men, here as elsewhere; especially as the Lord of the Castle himself favoured the Puritan party. Hence, it was but natural that the inhabitants should desire to read that Great Volume, in the pages of which men look for solace in this life and the way to salvation in the life eternal. Education was a necessity of the age, created by the religious aspirations of the comparatively untrammelled minds of the people. Accordingly, to provide for this necessity Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, with the aid of others, founded a school, in the year 1567, in order to "teach, instruct, and inform young boys and children in good morals, learning, knowledge, and virtue." Early in the reign of Elizabeth there were 64 families, or about 320 persons, living in Ashby; but this number must have been increased towards the conclusion of the century.

When George, the fourth Earl of Huntingdon, succeeded his brother, he inherited an impoverished estate; for it is said that his predecessor had disposed of *ninety-four* manors! He was far advanced in life at this time, and had married, nearly thirty years before, the second daughter of Sir John Port of Derbyshire. He had been elected high sheriff and representative of the County of Leicester. In the year 1595 he purchased from Robert, Earl of Essex, the park of Castle Donington, part of the Duchy of Lancaster. On the death of Elizabeth he received orders to proclaim King James, by whom he was appointed Lord Lieutenant of the counties of Leicester and Rutland. When Queen Anne (the consort of the new monarch) and Prince Henry, were on their way from York to London, he was desirous to entertain them. The following letter was sent to the Earl of Shrewsbury, requesting his influence to procure a visit from the Queen:



"Right Honourable,

"Presuming that your Lordship will beare with my bowldness, wherein my intent is honeste. This daye Sir William Skipwith and myselfe mett att my Honourable Lord Huntingdon's att dinner att Ashby: after that Sir William was gone his Lordship talked with me in private, and seemed very desyrous to have the Queen to come to his house; and spake it to that end, as I did verry well parseyve, that it might come to your eares: and further willed me to use my witts in this matter, so as that your Lordship might also know that if yow pleased to be a meanes to effect it, he would take it as a great kindness prosedinge from yourself. He would not be a mediator of this hymself, (I perseyved by him) because persons of his place would not wyllingle reseyve a denyall in so indyfferent a cawse. Yf your honor thynake it will be donne to his Lordship's content, though it be uppon this soddeyn, he wyll be well provyded according to the tyme this bearer shall spidily retowrn to bringe aunser. The wey from Wooleatton, I dare assure your Lordship, will be easie and fayr, and is just ten myles. So with my hartie preyr to Allmyghtie God to bless your Lordship with all honour, as my hart desyreth, I most humble take my leave.

"Your Honour's most bounden,  
during lyffe,

"Calke,

Robert Bainbrigg."

this 13th daye of June 1603."

Within a fortnight afterwards, the noble earl had the honour of entertaining his royal visitors at his Castle. He did not long survive this event; for he died in the year 1604, and was buried at Ashby, but no monument was placed over his remains.

Francis, his eldest son, died during the lifetime of his father; Henry, the second son, was an eccentric character, who resided principally at Woodland, Dorsetshire, where he lived

rather obscurely, his principal occupations being hunting, hawking, smoking, drinking, and caressing his neighbour's wives and daughters. Such, in brief, is the Earl of Shaftesbury's account of him. He was, in many respects, a picture of the "Old English Gentleman," who

"—— quaffed his cup of good old sack,  
To comfort his old nose."

His hall also was hung

"With guns, and pikes, and bows,  
And swords and good old bucklers, too,  
That had stood some good old blows."

He died on the 5th of October, 1650, at the patriarchal age of 100 years.

Henry, the fifth Earl of Huntingdon, was grandson to George, the fourth Earl. Before attaining his title, in the month of June 1603, when scarcely eighteen years old, he married the daughter of Ferdinando, the Earl of Derby, a lady of beautiful person and royal descent. The year following he attained his earldom. He kept up the establishment at Ashby in a style of princely magnificence. Soon after the marriage, the noble pair formed those excellent rules for the guidance of their household which display such an union of prudence and liberality as but seldom occurs. Upwards of seventy persons dined and supped daily at his table, exclusive of strangers; a fair idea of their family arrangements may be formed from the following extracts from the household book:—

"That the yoman of the buttrye bee readie at his office by eight of the clock in the mornynge, to serve for breakfasts, and at eleven for dynner, and three in the afternoone for beaver, and at six for supper, and at eight at night for lyverye.

"That the usher of the hall, as soon as their honnor's bourde in the great or withdrawinge chamber is covered, hee

be redie, for dynner and supper, to see the bourdes in the hall covered, and a basin and ewer for the steward's table every sabbath day, or when strangers be in the house.

“ That after the bourdes be covered, hee doe in decent order bare-headed, walke up and downe by the hall, to see all things orderlie observed; and that hee depart not from thence till all dinners or suppers be done.

“ That uppon the appearing of the server, and his going to the dresser, hee standing towards the upper end of the hall, doe, with a loud voice, say ‘gentlemen and yoman wait on the server;’ and at the coming of their honnor's meate hee be redie at the skreene to receave the server, and then say with a loud voice, ‘by your leave;’ and cause all men in the hall to come to the other side of the hall, and he bare-headed whilst their honnor's meate passeth through.

“ That when their honnor's meate is served up to the chamber, and the gentlewomen's, that he call with a loude voice, saying, ‘gentlemen's servants, to the dresser;’ and come himselfe with the steward's messe; and that, when there are strangers, he call the groomes of the stable to waite in the hall; and yf any refuse, to give knowledge to some of the head officers.

“ That hee cause everye man in the hall to be bare-headed when their honnor's second course, or fruit, doth passe through.

“ That hee suffer no supper in the hall upon fastynge nights.

“ That the yoman of the pantrye, hee clupp his bread orderlie without wast, and that hee serve all tables in the hall with such bread as shall be stale.

“ That the porter sitt not at the gate without his staffe.

“ That upon notice had of the goeing of the server to the dresser, hee doe straighte shutte the gates and suffer noe man to come in untill dynner be donne.

"That hee suffer no vagabonds, rogues, or deseased persons to linger about the gates.

"That hee shall shutte the gates at neine of the clock in wynter, and tenn in the sommer, and after those howers that hee open not them again before five of the clock in the mornynge in sommer, and six in wynter, withoute urgent cause.

"The nomber of my servants, both men and women,  
are ..... 62

"The nomber of my gentlemen are ..... 4

"The nomber of all that dine and sup daylie, besides  
strangers and others that come out of the towne, are ..... 68."

"A briefe of al the charges and expences for the provision  
of my Lorde's house.

	£. s. d.
" Item, for 55 beeves, at £3 10s. a beefe .....	191 10 0
Item, for 25 score of muttons, at £8 a score .....	200 0 0
Item, for linges and other salte fishe .....	70 0 0
Item, for hops, vinegar, and other things .....	30 0 0
Item, for wines for the yeere .....	80 0 0
Item, for grocerie .....	140 0 0
Item, for sweetmeates .....	20 0 0
Item, for fresh accates for the whole ycere .....	260 0 0
Item, for coles .....	80 0 0
Item, for rents and annuities for the yeere .....	197 13 4
Item, for the supplie of lynnens, and other things for the yeere ..	51 10 0
Item, for wages to my servants of all sorts .....	140 0 0
Item, for footman's cotes, and other charge to them .....	20 0 0
Item, for page's expences and wages .....	50 0 0
Item, for building and repairing my house .....	200 0 0
Item, for horses and saddles, and other stable furniture .....	205 0 0
Item, for hawkes and hounds, and the charge of them for the yeere, ..	40 0 0
Item, the charge of my apparel for the whole ycere .....	200 0 0
Item, my lady's allowance for the yeere .....	200 0 0
Item, the charge of my children's apparel, and attendance, for the yeere .....	60 0 0
Item, the charge of extraordinaire expences in rewardes, gyftes, and otherwise .....	100 0 0
Item, the charge of my suites in law, and going to London .....	320 0 0
The total sum of all manner of expences for the whole ycere ..	<u>£2855 13 4"</u>

This statement of the annual expenditure will be found

perfectly consistent with the dignity of so extensive an establishment: especially when the value of money at that time is taken into consideration.\*

A splendid mask was represented at the castle, in the month of August 1606, in which the performers were principally ladies of the neighbourhood. It was enacted in honour of the first visit of the Countess of Derby to her son-in-law.—A manuscript copy of this dramatic representation is in the library of the Earl of Bridgewater; it was written by John Marston, and entitled, “*The Lorde and Ladye of Huntingdon's Entertainment of their right noble mother, Alice, Countess Dowager of Derby.*”—It commences with the following dedication :

“ To the Right Noble Lady Alice, Countess Dowager of Derby.”

“ Madam,

If my slight muse may sute your noble merit,  
My hopes are crown'd, and I shall cheere my spirit;  
But if my weake quill droopes, or seems unfit,  
'Tis not for want of worth, but mine of wit.

“ The servant of your honor'd virtues.

John Marston.”

At the close of the drama, a shepherd sings “ A passionate ditty att my lady's departure ; he then presents the Countesse with a scarf, and adds :

“ Farewell ! Farewell !  
Joy, love, peace, health,  
In you long dwell,  
With our farewell, farewell.”

“ So the Countesse passed on untill she came through the little parke, where Niobe presented hir with a cabinet, and so departed.” The masquers and ladies were dressed in fanciful costumes, and went through many dances—galliards, corantos, and lavoltos—until “ evening was far spent.”

\* In the reign of Philip and Mary, Sir Thomas Cockayne of Ashbourne, Derbyshire, the best housekeeper of his quality in the county, allowed his lady £50 a year for maintaining his family, £1 a year wages to each servant, and £2 to the steward.

As an illustration of the tender attachment subsisting between the young nobleman and his wife the following letter may be cited. It was written by the Countess to the Earl, when she was temporarily absent from him, about the year 1610.

“ Dear Sweet harte ;

“ I prayes God, wee came very well hither, and about forr o’cloke [four o’clock]. Ye waters wear deepe, and not passable, at Bellgrave : wherefor Mr. Rydeings [Mr. Ruding of Westcotes, near Leicester,] guyded us another waye, over St. Sundaye’s bridge. Your much love and care of mee makes mee trouble yo with [an account of] my pas-sadge hither. God willinge I will be in ye coache to-morrow by seaven o’clocke ; for ‘tis a long journey. Your mayrs goe very well ; and the chariot mayr I will send back as yo appoynted. I will from hence wryte to my Lo. Graye [of Bradgate] yr. excuse and my owne. My Lo. is gone to my Lo. Sherrood’s [Sherard of Stapleford]; butt his eldest sonn fell sicke, and stayed my La.’s journeye. Newse I know non. Mr. Rydyngs will wayte on yo. Badger purposed, before I came, to coum to Don. [Donington] to-morrow or next daye ; and I wishe yo any company till I coum to foole [fill] up and suplye ther rooms. I beseech God send yo. helthe and send us a happy meeting. Indeede, I shall wishe myself with you much sooner than I can coum ; and to hastene my couming I will loose noe tyme : I will make it mayny dayes sooner downe, rather than staye, shoulde the weather be ill, after I have dun my busines ; and I hope in God I shall be sooner backe than you expect mee ; and as long as I have lyffe I will praye for yours ; and ever rest,

“ Your most affectionite wyffe till deathe,

E. Huntingdon.”

“ Leacester, Tuesday night.

“ As sounre as I have supte, God willing, I will to bed ; and

wishe yo. ther, and in yre owne bed ageyne, with as much ease as I used to walke between my little cabbin and yours," &c.

There is no affectation in these simple lines, so much resembling the letters of females in modern times, in their gossiping and lively character.

The Castle was again the scene of magnificent festivities, during the visit of James I. in the year 1617. On this occasion the entertainments were signalized by regal splendour. The dinners were served up by thirty poor knights in velvet gowns and gold chains. The expense of these was so great as seriously to diminish the Earl's fortune—a result at which the selfish sovereign is supposed to have aimed in conferring the honour of his visits upon his princely subject, whose youth rendered him exposed to these insidious though apparently friendly assaults on his hospitality.

Preparatory to the royal visit the Corporation of Leicester, in consideration of the earl's expenses, presented him with a yoke of fat oxen. Lord Stanhope, who was rather eccentric, in bold language told the king of the injury he was doing the Lord Huntingdon. While James was visiting at Ashby, it was usual for the neighbouring nobility to wait upon him and pay their respects; this homage (according to traditional anecdote,) was omitted by Lord Stanhope. His majesty offended at the neglect, sent for, and reproved him; but, concluded the king, "I excuse you, for the people say you are mad!" "I may be mad my liege sovereign," replied Lord Stanhope, but "I am not half so mad as my Lord Huntingdon, who is worried by bloodhounds."

In 1617, the Earl of Huntingdon obtained a license to keep yearly within the manor of Ashby-de-la-Zouch two fairs, one on the Tuesday in Whitsun-week and the other on St. Bartholomew's day; and also a court of pie-powder, to be held by the steward of the manor during the fairs.

In the years intervening between the reign of James and the Civil War, little occurred either in the life of the Earl or the history of Ashby, demanding notice. The Earl lived to witness the symptoms of the revolution, and to take some part in resisting its early advance; but fruitlessly. His younger son (Henry) became a leader of great energy and importance in the ranks of the royal party.

It is not the object of this history to detail the circumstances preceding the great civil struggle of the seventeenth century; but the part taken in it by the members of the family of Hastings cannot properly be here overlooked. Early in the year 1642, hostile preparations were made by the Parliamentarians and the Royalists of this county in enforcement of their respective sentiments and principles. The former were headed by the Earl of Stamford, whose seat was then at Bradgate, and who summoned his tenantry to his standard, on which were inscribed "For Religion," "King and Country," and "By my power." The Cavaliers were led on to the strife by the young and energetic Henry Hastings, who was the rival and mortal enemy of his near neighbour, the young Lord Grey. His banner was a fiery furnace on a red ground, and his motto bore an allusion to it, bespeaking the fierceness of his character. The first commission of array was published by Mr. Hastings, in Leicester, on the 16th of May—a few days after the House of Commons had made its declaration for the embodiment of the militia. In June, to quote a contemporary account,\* "Henry Hastings being in possession of several coal mines in Derbyshire, raised about one hundred colliers, whom he armed with pikes, muskets, and calivars, and caused all the horses belonging to the engines, to be in readiness; and as but few of the trained bands were come to him, he assembled his friends, many of them papists, and such as were ill-affected towards parliament, at Lough-

\* Thompson's History of Leicester.

borough, where, and at Ashby-de-la-Zouch, he bought up all the powder and old trooper's saddles that on sudden could be. When all were come together, he made proclamation, that whoever wanted arms should be furnished from Garendon Abbey, and other popish places; and so they marched with drums and colours towards Leicester, himself marching before them. When within three miles of Leicester, he caused powder, match, and bullets, to be delivered to every musketeer, then marched before them into Leicester, and began to read the commission of array. Afterwards the high sheriff read the votes of the house of parliament, wherein the commission was voted illegal: some of the royalists then shot at the messenger of the House of Commons, and two butchers of Leicester, throwing Henry Hastings on his horse, he drew his pistols, and marched with the rest of his company to his inn, and shut the gates. The Earl of Stamford then sent some of his servants into the town, to command such as had soldiers in their houses to steal their arms while they were asleep: in consequence of this stratagem, their arms were seized, and Henry Hastings was obliged to run away that night at eleven o'clock."

The two leaders kept the town of Leicester in a perpetual state of turmoil and disorder by their hostile visits. Men were placed on guard, day and night, at the gates, and chains were placed across the bridges, in order to prevent the sudden entrance of bodies of armed men of either party. In the month of August, Prince Rupert, with Colonel Hastings and several cavaliers, made a sudden and successful assault upon Bradgate, taking thence all the arms and goods, and even the clothes of the chaplain, who was compelled to fly to save his life. Some of the leaders of the party cried out, "Where are the brats—the young children?" swearing they would kill them, "that there might be no more of the breed of them."

Colonel Hastings now fortified the Castle of Ashby-de-la-Zouch. We may suppose that he encircled it, as was the custom of the times, with entrenchments and horn-works, which prevented a sudden capture or easy access. Within were collected some of the sincere adherents to the royal cause, with others of a ruffianly description. A Parliamentarian, in writing to a friend from Leicester to London, thus describes the castle and its inmates at this date :

"Our forces are gone with Derby horse, towards Ashby ; but the enemy are very strong, and their works good ; they have vaults under the ground, through which they can go from one fort to another at their pleasure. Provisions they have good store, hung beef, round about their kitchen within, and have lately been killing and salting of more. The Earl of Huntingdon is in the garrison, but the Lord Loughborough is not there. There are as debased, wicked wretches there, as if they had been raked out of hell, as we are informed by some that have come from thence. They have invented a new kind of compliment, for a kind of protestation ; and if they affirm or deny a thing, it is usual to do it with this saying,\* . . . . . in their ordinary speech. And this is no wonder, for they have three malignant priests there, such as will drink and roar, and domineer, and swear as well as ever a cabb of them all ; and end and begin one health after another, and swear and domineer, so as it would make one's heart to ache, to hear the country people relate what they have heard of them. The cabb will cozen and cheat one another most wonderfully, steal one another's horses, and ride out and sell them, and sometimes come again, sometimes run away, as if they were at their wit's end ; there are also many Irish there ; who have lately made a new fort,† a very strong work, and it is called the Irish fort, who

\* The phrase is so objectionable that it is here omitted.

† Probably Mount House.

have been bold upon some clashing between them and those that profess to be protestants in Ashby garrison. The Irish rebels have told them to their faces, that they fight for the old, true, catholic religion, which is better than ours, and puts them in better condition than they that are heretics ; and swear that if ever they be straitened in a siege, they will burn the town to the ground : but our forces are gone to try what they can do."

At the latter end of the year 1644, and the commencement of the following year, the occurrences took place which are described in the letters given underneath :—

" November 28th.—This day there came letters from Derby, which certify that the Derby, Nottingham, and Leicester forces, are fortifying at Cole-Orton, within two miles of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, and that their works go forward apace. And it is further certified, that a party from Cole-Orton, marched to Ashby-de-la-Zouch, which caused the enemy to retreat, and lie close in the castle, so that our [the Parliamentarian] forces marched into Ashby : and hearing where Hastings had left his store of provisions (who, it is reported, is himself gone to the king ; for certain he is not in Ashby, but his brother the Earl of Huntingdon is there) but had left some provisions at a house in the town ; which our forces hearing of, went into Ashby : and the enemy being retreated into the castle, our forces took carriages, and brought it out into their own quarters at Cole-Orton, and sent a summons to the Castle, to require it to be surrendered to them for the service of the King and Parliament ; but, being denied, go forward with their works at Cole-Orton. So that, however, though they do not besiege the castle, yet they will keep them in, and so secure the country from being plundered by them, and procure free trade and free passage in those parts, which will be a great comfort to them."

" The blocking up of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, by the Leicester

and Derby forces, goes on very well; and the Lord Beaumont's house at Cole-Orton is strongly fortified. There are hopes, if care be taken to prevent the enemy's sending relief, a good account will be given of that garrison in a short time."

"December 31st.—The Leicester forces at Cole-Orton, got in very well, and have lately performed a good piece of service against the enemy at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; when, entering the town, they beat the enemy into the tower, Hastings's stronghold, took divers papers and many arms."

"February 18th, 1645.—Colonel Hastings for the king, sent out warrants for carriages to fetch hay to Ashby; the Parliament's forces sent out their warrants to bring the hay to Cole-Orton, but Hastings was too quick, and had compelled the country to load the hay, and with a strong guard, was bringing it to his garrison. Captain Temple having notice thereof, got between them and Ashby, in the van, and three troops of Derby following in the rear, after a little engagement, Hastings's men fled, and were routed and pursued; forty of them taken prisoners, sixty horse, arms, and all their hay."

"February 26th.—A party of the royalists from Ashby attacked Cole-Orton, intending to have surprised and plundered the town, but in the attempt lost seventy or eighty of their horse."

In the month of May following the king besieged Leicester, some of his forces having been previously quartered at Ashby-de-la-Zouch. They prevented the garrison of Cole-Orton rendering any assistance to that of Leicester at this juncture; as the former was within cannon shot of the fort at Ashby. The soldiers of Cole-Orton had sent balls into the town, where their enemy lay quartered; so near to each other were the two places. Colonel Hastings summoned the Cole-Orton garrison to surrender, but was peremptorily met by a defiant answer, and some of them issuing on the rear of the king's army

took and put to death forty of their cavalry soldiers. The king dined at Ashby two or three days before the storming of Leicester on the 31st of the month. On that day the Parliamentarians quitted their garrisons of Bagworth, Cole-Orton, Kirby, and Burleigh.

Brief, indeed, was the triumph of the royalist arms. Scarcely a fortnight had elapsed before they experienced the signal and disastrous defeat at Naseby which will be familiar to most readers. The capture of Leicester was but the brief and deceitful gleam of sunshine which preceded the overwhelming tempest. On the afternoon of the 14th of June (Saturday) Charles was a wretched fugitive, having been pressed to the very walls of Leicester by the pursuing cavalry of Fairfax. "In the evening of that dismal Saturday," writes a royalist, "we marched (for we had left running) to Ashby." The miserable and ruined monarch had scarcely time to snatch a few hours of rest—sleep would be impossible—in the Castle of Ashby, before he found it necessary to depart for Lichfield, on the Sabbath following the day of blood at Naseby.

Leicester was restored to the Parliamentarian party, by the governor Hastings (who had become Lord Loughborough), on the 17th of June. On the following morning the garrison marched out; the governor to Ashby, the officers and soldiers to Lichfield. Lord Loughborough remained in the Castle, which was closely besieged by his enemies. In September the town was visited with sickness, the garrison being reduced to sixty men; but in October nearly six hundred more of the king's army joined them. On the 7th of February succeeding, a party of about eighty horse and forty dragoons were despatched by night from Leicester, under the command of Major Meeres, to Ashby-de-la-Zouch. He "marched with such expedition and privacy, that they came to Ashby, about eleven o'clock that night, undiscovered, which was about

twelve mile's march; whither being come, they suddenly surprised the sentinels, fell in at the turnpike, broke the chain, and entered the town, took nearly an hundred of the enemy's horse, being the greater part of the horse of that garrison; whereof fifty were already saddled, and fitted to have gone upon some design of theirs. They took store of arms and other pillage, released divers prisoners, and some countrymen, whom the enemy had taken for ransoms:—and thus having plundered the town, all these our friends returned to Leicester, without the least molestation; the enemy who was in the great house or close, either not receiving the alarm, or not daring to come forth at all against them."

On the 28th of the same month articles of agreement were entered into between Colonel Hastings, the governor of Ashby, and Colonel Needham, the governor of Leicester, for the surrender and "sleighting" of the former place. They were as follows:—

"1. Imprimis, that all the officers and soldiers, now at Ashby, and under the command of Colonel General Hastings, and that are over and above the number hereafter specified, shall, upon Monday next, after the signing hereof, (being the 2nd day of March,) depart and quit the garrison, and march away, without further stay or continuance there.

"2. Item, that upon the Tuesday following, Colonel General Hastings shall begin to slight the works and fortifications of the town and garrison of Ashby; and to that end, shall endeavour and procure assistance from the country, as well as receive all such as be sent to that purpose; and not forbear until the whole be slighted and unfortified.

"3. Item, that at the end of three months, hereafter specified, Colonel General Hastings shall deliver up Ashby-house itself, being now a garrison of the king's, into the hands of his brother the Earl of Huntingdon.

“ 4. Item, that upon signing these articles, all prisoners of this county to be set at liberty, and to have tickets to go home.

“ 5. Item, that sufficient hostages (and such as shall be thought fit by Colonel Needham,) be given for the safe return of any convoy that shall be granted by him.

“ 6. Item, that Colonel General Hastings, with his officers, gentlemen, and soldiers, shall have liberty (if they please) to march away to Bridgenorth or Worcester, with their horses, arms, and ammunition, bag, and baggage, trumpets sounding, drums beating, colours flying, matches lighted on both ends, muskets loaded, one brass gun, and a case of sacks in boxes, and have sufficient carriage allowed them, and six days liberty for their passage.

“ 7. Item, that Colonel General Hastings, his officers and gentlemen, and also all manner of persons, as well soldiers as others, and that are now members of that garrison, and now belonging to it, shall have liberty to lay down their arms, and have protection to live at home if they please, they submitting to all ordinances of parliament.

“ 8. Item, that all the sequestrations of Colonel General Hastings, the Earl of Huntingdon, and Colonel Perkins, (governor of Ashby-house,) be taken off, upon the sleighting of Ashby garrison.

“ 9. Item, that Sir Richard Skeffington, and Colonel Needham, shall have liberty and power to compound for the estates of such officers and gentlemen as are expressed in the list given in; whether of Leicester, Derby, Stafford, Nottingham, or Warwickshires: or so many of them, as shall think fit to compound with them, for their estates.

“ 10. Item, that Colonel General Hastings, with the said gentlemen and their servants that desire to stay with him, not exceeding the number of one hundred, may have free liberty to stay at Ashby for three months after the signing

of these articles; and not to be molested during the said term for any debts or engagements, or otherwise, by any of the parliament's party, they doing nothing prejudicial to the parliament.

" 11. Item, that Colonel General Hastings, and the said gentlemen with their servants and horses, not exceeding in number of horse, one hundred and fifty, shall have a sufficient convoy, and pass to Hull or Bristol; and therefrom, by order of parliament, to have a ship provided to transport them either to France or Holland, whither they please.

" H. Loughborough.  
" John Needham."

In August, 1648, the command of Ashby-de-la-Zouch was given to Lord Grey, of Grooby—the bitter foe of its former possessors—who had also in charge the Duke of Hamilton, then a prisoner in the Castle.

On the 28th of November following, a committee appointed by the House of Commons assembled at Leicester, in order to take into consideration the state of the castles, garrisons, and places of strength in the kingdom; and determine what should be destroyed, and what should be kept in repair for the use of parliament. At this meeting it was resolved that the garrison of Ashby-de-la-Zouch should immediately be slighted and made untenable; and that James, Earl of Cambridge, then a prisoner in the castle for high treason, should be committed close prisoner to Windsor Castle. In consequence of this resolution several members of the committee were appointed to view the garrison, who determined that it should be demolished by undermining, and appointed William Bainbrigg of Lockington, in the county of Leicester (who commanded a party of horse for the occasion), to carry the decision of the committee into effect.

Bainbrigg (who was a zealous Parliamentarian) executed his commission thoroughly, completely demolishing the Castle

as a place either of residence or defence. From that date to the present have the stately towers, and once defiant battlements, been gradually mouldering away, and telling their sad story to the listening night winds or the ruthless winter blasts. Even in their fall they preserve their dignity, and they are yet eloquent to him who has a heart and a soul, unfolding their history of ancient grandeur and recalling the melancholy memories of bygone deeds and events.

## CHAPTER IV.

REMOVAL OF THE HASTINGS FAMILY TO DONINGTON PARK—GROWTH OF PURITANISM IN ASHBY—THE REV. ARTHUR HILDERSAM—THE FIRST DISSENTING MINISTER OF ASHBY, THE REV. SAMUEL SHAW, AND HIS CONGREGATION—DR. JOSEPH HALL, BISHOP OF NORWICH—JOHN BAINBRIDGE, M.D.—SOCIAL CHARACTER OF THE INHABITANTS—CONTESTED ELECTIONS IN 1719 AND 1775—FIRES IN THE TOWN—THOMAS KIRKLAND, M.D.—ENCLOSURE ACTS—CANAL AND TRAM ROADS—DISCOVERY OF ANCIENT COINS IN 1788 AND 1818—LOCAL STATISTICS—FRANCIS, THE FIRST MARQUIS OF HASTINGS—GEORGE, THE SECOND MARQUIS.

AFTER the Royalist party had been everywhere defeated, and the Parliamentarians had obtained supreme rule, a lull followed the tempest of civil war. Lord Loughborough and others were banished the kingdom by an order of the government, which, however, was recalled in the month of December 1647. The warm partisans of the late king were yet subject to persecution and penalties, and were glad to escape from them, either by seeking retirement or by flying from the country. The Hastings family, no longer able to reside in their old ancestral seat, fixed their residence at Donington Park, and left the remaining part of the castle of Ashby to its fate—gradual but complete dilapidation and decay. The Earl of Huntingdon died in the year 1655, having passed his life in a most harassing period, in which he sought, by prudent retirement and abstinence from active exertion in public matters, to escape the evils attendant on the national convulsions; but by the combined effects of the sequestration of his estates and the charges of a family of seven children, he was for several years reduced to a pitiable condition. He was buried in the church at Ashby. Lord Loughborough

survived the Protectorate, and on the Restoration was made Lord Lieutenant of the county. He then lived at Loughborough House, Lambeth; but died five or six years afterwards, and was buried at Windsor. He was never married. His life—passed amid awful scenes of bloodshed, and the privations produced by defeat and disaster—was one which is, happily, very rarely experienced.

The events occurring in Ashby for half a century following the date of the Civil War, were not striking or unusual. The natural consequences of those which took place before then, were observable in the changes of sentiment, political and religious, that were subsequently effected. The Puritan feeling of the inhabitants had probably been strengthened, rather than impaired, by the presence of a licentious and lawless garrison of Irish Roman Catholics in the castle, during the war; while the pulpit teachings of the Rev. Arthur Hildersam, the Vicar—who suffered fine, excommunication, and imprisonment for that cause he valued higher than money, liberty, or personal comfort—were followed by the active labours, in the same direction, of a clergyman named Shaw, of whom we shall shortly speak. A few particulars relative to Mr. Hildersam may not be uninteresting in this place. He was the son of a gentleman of ancient family, and the grandson on the side of his mother of Sir Geoffrey Pole, and related to the Cardinal of that name. Early in life his parents discarded him, because he would not join the Romish communion; and he was, when young, an assistant lecturer in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, of which he became the vicar in the year 1593, on the death of the Rev. Thomas Wyddowes; he was indebted to his kinsman, Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, for this appointment. He was “silenced” and “restored” four times. His views led him to Nonconformity—not so far, however, as to become a Separatist; for it was only with respect to wearing the surplice, baptizing with the cross, and kneeling

at the sacrament, that he dissented from the practices of the Church. For many years did this zealous and good man labour in advancing the spiritual welfare of the parishioners, in promoting peace among them, in giving confidence to the doubtful, and in setting an example of christian consistency; the amiability and frankness of his manner rendering him an object of universal esteem. In November 1611, he completed a series of 108 Lectures on the Fourth chapter of St. John's Gospel, verses 10—53, which the Earl of Huntingdon constantly attended, and thereby encouraged by his presence, in the Parish Church. They were afterwards published, and dedicated to his lordship. During the years 1625—31, Mr. Hildersam preached a course of 152 Lectures on the Fifty-first Psalm, verses 1—7, which were also published, and dedicated to the Countess of Chesterfield. This work, a celebrated writer states, is “a rich mine of experimental and practical divinity.” He died in the year 1632, after having officiated in Ashby in his ministerial capacity for more than forty-three years. His works and name are still cherished by the inhabitants after the lapse of two centuries.

The Rev. Samuel Shaw, already named, was a Presbyterian. He was presented by Protector Cromwell to the rectory of Long Whatton, whence he was removed about a year before the passing of the Act of Uniformity. He then resided at Cotes, near Loughborough, where five members of his family were carried off by the plague, and he was reduced to the harrowing necessity of burying them in his own garden. In 1668 he was chosen sole master of the Grammar School at Ashby, and raised the number of scholars to 160. He built a new school and school-house, and erected a gallery in the church for the use of his pupils. But his chief influence was as a Nonconformist teacher. “I have known him,” said one well acquainted with him, “spend part of many days and nights in religious exercises, when, through fear of

imprisonment, we have been fain to steal to the place in the dark, put out the light and keep in the voice by clothing the windows, till the first day-break down the chimney gave us notice to be gone." He formed the first congregation of Dissenters in Ashby, and subsequently ministered to them in the school-room, and at a place in the street now known as Bath-street; where it is probable he was in the habit of preaching until his departure from Ashby, a few years before his death in January 1696. The congregation which he founded was of the Independent denomination.

It would be unpardonable in a work like this to pass unnoticed that great and good man, Dr. Joseph Hall, Bishop of Norwich, who was born at Prestop Park, in this parish, July 1st, 1574, in a house the site of which is now occupied by a cottage and farm buildings belonging to Mr. Hill of Burton-upon-Trent, and distant about a mile from the town of Ashby. His father, who was at that time in office under the Earl of Huntingdon, having devoted him to the work of the ministry from his infancy, had him educated at the Free Grammar School of his native town, and afterwards sent him to Emanuel College, Cambridge; having, however, a family of twelve children, he was after two years, unable longer to bear his son's expences, and applied to have him appointed Master of the Ashby Free Grammar School; but this was prevented by the benevolent interposition of an uncle, Mr. Sleigh of Derby, who agreed to bear part of the expence of his nephew's continuance at the University. Here he soon took his degrees, and entered into the public disputations with great success; but wishing rather to devote himself to the study of divinity and the service of the sanctuary, he obtained ordination and was appointed to the Rectory of Halstead in Suffolk. His income being small he was compelled, as he states, "to write books in order to buy books." He afterwards accompanied Lord Bacon to Germany, and while there com-

posed one volume of his "Meditations." On his return to London, he was presented to the living of Waltham Holy Cross, Essex; and in 1612 was appointed to the Deanery of Worcester, and took his degree of Doctor in Divinity. On the accession of Charles I. he was offered the Bishopric of Gloucester, which he declined; but was consecrated Bishop of Exeter in 1637. It was impossible that Dr. Hall could side with the extreme opinions of either of the two parties with which the nation was then divided. The author of "No Peace with Rome," and of theological works such as his, could have little sympathy with the dominant faction in the Church in the early years of Charles's reign. By them he was branded as a Puritan. And although specially cautious to avoid unnecessary offence, "the billows," says he, "went so high that I was three several times upon my knee to his Majesty to answer great criminations." On the other hand, the author of "Episcopacy by Divine Right," and of "A Humble Remonstrance in behalf of the Liturgy," was still more obnoxious to those who waged exterminating war against every privilege and possession of the English Church. Inflexible in his adherence to the doctrinal Articles of the Church, and alike unyielding to the popular clamour then prevalent against an Episcopacy which he believed to be scriptural, and a Book of Common Prayer in which he found nothing contrary to the Word of God, the ebbings and flowings of party violence had no power over the deeply-rooted principles of his early life.

In 1641 he was translated to the see of Norwich; but by this time the popular voice was so loud against Episcopacy, that he and eleven others of his episcopal brethren were beset and prevented from taking their seats in the House of Lords. They then signed a protest against the validity of all laws made during their forced absence; and on its being laid before the House of Commons, they were immediately

impeached for high treason in attempting to invalidate the authority of the legislature, and instantly ordered to be committed to the Tower. It was easy to imprison the Bishops, but difficult to substantiate any crime against them, especially that of high treason, and accordingly in a few months afterwards they were all liberated on bail. Speaking of his translation from Exeter to Norwich, he says, “I left that, my once dear diocese, being called by his Majesty to remove to Norwich, but I *took the Tower in my way.*” The pious Bishop then entered on his new diocese, and enjoyed great tranquillity till the following spring. On the commencement of the Civil War, he was treated with the utmost severity. His revenue was seized, and his books and furniture were all exposed for sale; but a benevolent lady advanced their value and returned them to their owner. He was at length insulted, and violently ejected from his palace; and would have been utterly destitute, but for the kindness of a neighbour, who received him into his house. He removed soon after to Heigham, a village in the neighbourhood of Norwich, where he rented a little land; and, notwithstanding his reduced circumstances, distributed weekly charity to a number of poor widows. In this secluded situation he remained until his death, which took place on the 8th of September, 1656, in the eighty-second year of his age.

In 1582, Dr. John Bainbridge was born at Ashby. He was educated at the Free Grammar School, and was afterwards sent to Emanuel College, Cambridge, under the tuition of his kinsman, Dr. Joseph Hall. In 1619 he was appointed first Professor of Astronomy in the University of Oxford; and at his death, in 1643, left several works upon astronomy, some of which were never published.

The pen of the topographer passes very rapidly over periods of tranquillity and social progress, when order reigns, wealth increases, industry thrives, and population multiplies. One

of these eras was certainly that in which William and Mary were on the throne. In the last ten years of the seventeenth century, Ashby was stationary in point of population; on an average there were 40 baptisms yearly, 36 burials, and 7 marriages. On the opening of the eighteenth century its market for strong horses had become the best in England. Its ale was then equal to that of Burton, and its inhabitants of the middle classes were noted for their social and generous character. In the Christmas holidays they entertained each other splendidly; in summer they met often on their bowling-green, the only one in the neighbourhood.\* On Mondays the nobility and gentry of the district were wont to dine and bowl together; so that free intercourse appears to have existed among all classes.

In the reign of George I. the freeholders of Leicestershire were divided in political sentiment by the Jacobite controversy. The adherents to the house of Stuart were still numerous among the gentry and their tenants; but some of the aristocracy were as decidedly supporters of the house of Brunswick. The Manners family were of the latter class, and even in the contest of Charles I. with his parliament the Earl of Rutland was on the popular side. In the year 1719 the death of Sir Thomas Cave created a vacancy in the representation for the county. This event afforded an opportunity to the Whig and Tory parties for trying their relative strength. Lord William Manners was the champion of the former, and of course was identified with the cause of the reigning family: Francis Mundy, Esq., was the candidate of the party who were ready to draw the sword for the exiled Prince "over the water." The election took place on Thursday, the seventeenth day of December. Party spirit was unusually bitter and unusually unscrupulous on the occasion. Halbert-men refused to give admission to the polling booth,

\* Mackay's Journal of a Tour through England.

to freeholders who were going to vote, unless they would purchase their passage with money. Magistrates took away licenses from publicans who voted contrary to their wishes, and remitted fines to persons who had incurred them, on their giving their suffrages to the favourite candidate. A message was sent to a commissioner in the peace, threatening him with the loss of his commission, unless he voted against the interest he had espoused. Some persons were allowed to vote twice over, others prevented from voting, and rioting encouraged. The result of the polling was that Manners obtained 2,727 votes, and Mundy 2,705. At this time 47 persons polled from Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Of these, only four were Whigs and recorded their votes for Manners; their names were

William Adcock,              James Richards, and  
Petty Dewick,              James Tettly.

Mundy's supporters—the Jacobites—who wished to see James III. on the throne, were these:

William Abbingdon,	John Elton,	John Rest,
Thomas Abney,	William Harley,	Edward Sabine,
John Adams,	Richard Hays,	Joseph Smith (Clerk), the
Thomas Adams,	Nathaniel Hazard,	Vicar,
Josiah Allot,	John Hood,	William Springthorpe,
John Almy,	Thomas Hutchinson,	James Spencer,
Seth Bamford,	Samuel Johnson,	John Swain,
James Bates,	Nicholas Joyce,	William Swain (Clerk),
Edward Bennett,	William Lynes (Clerk),	John Thornton,
Abraham Bodle,	John Mynors,	John Wallis,
Robert Bodle,	Richard Newton,	Thomas Wallis,
Joseph Clarke,	John Orton,	Henry White (Gentlem.),
William Crew,	Richard Orton,	James Wilkins,
James Dale,	Leonard Piddocke (Gen-	James Woodroff, and
Isaac Dawson,	tleman),	William Yenn.

It may afford some interest to the descendants of these parties, after the lapse of one hundred and thirty years, and now that the embers of strife are extinguished, to notice how their progenitors voted when the struggle took place between the partisans of Guelph and Stuart.

Of the events happening in Ashby in the middle of the eighteenth century none deserve particularly recording, except the fire which happened on July 12th, 1753, consuming 150 bays of buildings. A similar occurrence is recorded twenty years after, when five houses were burnt down in consequence of a conflagration breaking out on the premises of Mr. Reason, a hatter.

The social habits of the people of Ashby were at this time and in succeeding years, characterized by conviviality and musical taste. Dr. Kirkland, a physician of eminent professional and literary attainments and benevolent disposition,\* took a distinguished part in the musical meetings, which must have greatly relieved the dulness of life in a market town, when newspapers and books were almost unknown by the inhabitants generally.

Another election contest took place in the year 1775, in which the energies of Whig and Tory were put forth to procure the return of their respective candidates. The death of Lord Viscount Wentworth, and the succession of the Hon. Thomas Noel, his son, to the peerage, had created a vacancy in the representation which John Peach Hungerford, Esq., of Dingley, on the part of the Tories, and William Pochin, Esq., of Barkby, on the part of the Whigs, proposed to supply. The former was known by the populace under the *soubriquet* of the "D—l of Dingley." The contest was conducted by the candidates with mutual courtesy, but equal earnestness. So great, however, was the strength of the old Jacobite and Tory feeling that it predominated over the Whig influence, and, after a contest of fourteen days (from the twelfth to the twenty-sixth of January)—the houses of Rutland and Stamford, with their adherents, throwing their help into the scale on the Whig

\* He died in 1798, aged 77, and was buried with every mark of public respect.

side—Mr. Hungerford was triumphant. Fifty-six freeholders polled from Ashby-de-la-Zouch. Of these the following polled for the Whig candidate :

Thomas Adams,	Henry Hallam,	Benjamin Pullin,
Henry Blinkhorne,	Thomas Harris,	Thomas Richards, Esq.,
James Blinkhorne,	Francis Mee,	John Sheffield, and
Samuel Clarke,	John Prior (Clerk),	Peter Sutton.

For the Tory candidate these names are recorded :

Thomas Adcock,	William Hacket,	Thomas Potter,
Thomas Allen,	Thomas Hextall, Sen.	Joseph Rice,
Edward Ashpinshaw,	John Hood,	George Roe,
James Ball,	Dr. Kirkland,	Charles Rowlatt,
Seth Bamford,	Thomas Knight,	Thomas Sheppard,
Jas. Blinkhorne (baker),	John Leatherland,	Thomas Sleath,
James Bodell,	Adin Ley,	Robert Smith,
James Brightman,	William Mee,	Jonathan Snelson,
Thomas Chapman,	John Minors (Gentlem.),	Joseph Snelson,
Timothy Clarkson,	Richard Newton,	John Sowter,
Peter Cowper (Clerk),	John Newton,	Richard Springthorpe,
Benjamin Dewes,	Thomas Nicholson,	Samuel Timms,
Thomas Farmer,	Francis Palmer,	John Vincent, and
Thomas Flavel,	Thomas Parker,	Joseph Wrangle.
James Gardiner,	William Pemberton,	

Owing to the enormous expense of the contest the means of both parties were exhausted, and a kind of compromise was effected by the return of Mr. Pochin at the general election in 1780.

An act of parliament was passed in 1768 for enclosing several open and common fields, called the "Great Field," the "Middle Field," and the "Lion's Well Field"; and three commons—the "Horse" or "Brick-kilns" common, the "Goose-Pen" and the "Drift," within the lordship; containing altogether about 1,040 acres. In the act Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, is described as lord of the manor, and Thomas Richards, Esq., John Piddocke, gentleman, Edward Ashpinshaw, Henworth Newton, and others, as entitled to the residue of the lands and grounds, and right of common within and upon the said fields, meadow grounds, and commons.

In the year 1800 an act of parliament (40 Geo. III.) was obtained for enclosing a Common or waste ground called "Ashby Woulds"; containing, as stated in the act, about 3000 acres. The "Woulds" is distant about two miles from the town; and although not fifty years ago all was comparative sterility, producing only a bare maintenance for a few wretched-looking sheep—the scene is now changed to that of a district of well cultivated land. Many houses and other buildings have been erected, and a pleasing picture of thriving industry is exhibited; but the chief and most important feature is the establishment of what is termed the Moira Colliery. The Marquis of Hastings, then Earl of Moira, as Lord of the manor of Ashby, was, as stated in the enclosure act, "entitled to the soil and minerals of and within the said Common or Waste Ground," and the knowledge that there was a valuable bed of coal under this common formed one of the public reasons for obtaining the Ashby Canal Act. Soon after the enclosure act was obtained Lord Hastings began to sink for coal; and amidst numberless disappointments, and at an enormous expense, ultimately succeeded in reaching, at a depth of upwards of one thousand feet, a seam of coal about eleven feet in thickness and of superior quality. Since this period the Moira Colliery has been successfully worked, and is now a source of large revenue to the Hastings family. A considerable number of houses for the colliers, formed as a street, have been erected, and the name of "Moira" is given to the village. Some idea may be formed of the growing importance of the Woulds, from the fact that the lands within its district are, by a recent valuation, found to be of the rateable value of £5125 12s. 0d.

During the fever of speculation for Navigable Canals throughout England (a fever almost as violent as that during the Railway mania of 1845-6), an act of parliament

was obtained in the year 1794 for making a navigable Canal from Bedworth in Warwickshire to Ashby, and thence to the lime works at Ticknall and Cloud Hill. The original project was not fully carried out, owing—to use the expression of the Chairman of the Committee, the Marquis of Hastings (then Earl of Moira)—to “a paucity of means forthcoming”; and instead of a navigable canal through the town of Ashby, Tram Roads, with branches, were substituted from a point of the canal near Willesley, to the lime works at Ticknall and Cloud Hill. It is an unprecedented circumstance in this country, that throughout the whole length of the Canal, a distance of upwards of 30 miles, there is not a single lock. This Canal with its Tram Roads was, in the year 1846, by an act of parliament then obtained, sold and conveyed to the Midland Railway Company, for the sum of £110,000. The act contains powers preventing the discontinuance of the canal by its new proprietors; and it is asserted by them, that amidst all their various speculations and investments they have not one paying a better interest than the Ashby-de-la-Zouch Canal.

In October 1788 a discovery of 450 ancient silver coins was made by some workmen, who were repairing the head of a fish-pond in a place called Millstone-Gutter, on the Wolds. Almost all of them were pennies of Stephen's reign, a few only being of Henry I., II., and III. Upwards of sixty were cut in halves, and a dozen in quarters. They were enclosed in a small leaden box, of an oblong form, which was reduced to powder by decay, and mouldered away on exposure to the air. The coins once formed a treasure; but to whom belonging cannot now be even guessed with any approach to accuracy. Seven specimens have been engraved in Nichols's History of the County. One appears to have been minted by Wilkelin the coiner of Derby; another by Swein of Nottingham; a third by Ælfwine at Southampton; and a fourth in London.

A discovery of Roman coins was also made at Ashby in the year 1818, on lands known as the Lawn Hills, about half-a-mile north of the town, by some farm servants whilst ploughing. They were deposited in two Roman urns, a larger and a smaller one; and were brought to light by the plough striking against the brass rim of the larger urn. Both were filled with pieces issued in the reigns of the Emperors of the third century.—Most of these Roman, as well as the English coins discovered in 1788, are now in the possession of the Lord of the Manor.

About the year 1790 the number of dwellings in the parish was 484; of teams 27; of farm-houses 24. The manufacture of woollen and cotton stockings and hats was then carried on; but the war had proved very injurious to the commerce of the town. The authority whence these facts were derived (Sir Frederick Morton Eden) also states that spinners of wool then earned 1*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* weekly; woolcombers, 12*s.* to 14*s.*; framework-knitters, 7*s.* to 17*s.*; hatters, 12*s.* to 20*s.*; labourers in husbandry 6*s.* in winter, and from 7*s.* to 9*s.* in summer, with victuals. Beef was then from 3½*d.* to 5*d.* the pound; mutton 5*d.*; butter 9*d.* to 10½*d.*; bread-flour 4*s.* a stone; potatoes 5*d.* the gallon; and milk 1½*d.* the quart. There were then in existence eight friendly societies, having from 40 to 80 members each. These statistics, dry as they may appear to the general reader, will afford thoughtful persons the means of calculating what the physical condition of the industrious classes was in the times of our grandfathers.

A considerable advance was made in the number of burials during the decennial period terminating with the year 1794, when compared with that referred to at an earlier page of this chapter: the average yearly number of baptisms being, at the close of the last century, 64; of burials, 58; and of marriages, 20.

The progress of Ashby in size, population, architectural

improvements, and other respects, has been during the last half century remarkable, and far surpassing what is to be noticed in any preceding period of its history. The proofs of this are not so evident in the few first years of the century as at a subsequent date. And here it is our duty to record some particulars connected with the life of the first Marquis of Hastings.

Francis, the tenth Earl of Huntingdon, and the twenty-third in lineal descent from the founder of the family, Robert de Hastings, died unmarried in the year 1789; and was buried at Ashby with his ancestors. He left by will the greater part of his large estates to his nephew, Francis, Lord Rawdon; who, in pursuance of the testamentary direction of his uncle, and by the sanction of the Crown, took the name and arms of Hastings in addition to his own.

This nobleman, born in the year 1754, entered the army before he attained his majority, being engaged at the terrible conflict of Bunker's Hill, and afterwards in other parts of the United States, where he distinguished himself by active and judicious service. He was created Baron Rawdon, of Rawdon, when in his twenty-ninth year. As a member of the Upper House, he was known for his manly oratory, his business talents, and his benevolent exertions in promoting the debtor and creditor bill, which was introduced into parliament for the purpose of affording relief to persons imprisoned for the non-payment of small debts. His lordship succeeded his father as second Earl of Moira in the month of June 1793, and in the same year was advanced to the rank of major-general, and commander-in-chief of an army intended to co-operate with the royalists in Brittany. In the year 1803 the Earl was appointed commander-in-chief in Scotland, and promoted to the rank of general; and in 1812 he was appointed governor-general of the British dominions in India.

His administration of that extensive empire, during which he exercised the united powers of governor-general and commander-in-chief, under circumstances the most critical, and demanding the utmost exertion of the greatest talent, will be a durable monument to his fame. The vigorous and successful accomplishment of the Nepaul war was his most important achievement: for his conduct in which he was honoured with the thanks of the British Parliament, and as a proof of the satisfaction of the East India Company with his administration, he was continued governor of India a double term of years. During the progress of these public services, the Earl was created Viscount Loudon, Earl of Rawdon, and Marquis of Hastings, on the 7th of December, 1816. His health being much affected by the climate and by his great exertions, he requested to be recalled, and in 1822 his request was granted.

On his return to England, the venerable Marquis was joyfully received by the inhabitants of his ancient town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, who testified their respect by every demonstration of gladness and festivity. The principal street was tastefully ornamented with boughs, flowers, and emblematical devices, while crowds, on horseback and on foot, rendered the scene altogether a picture of animated and enthusiastic joy.

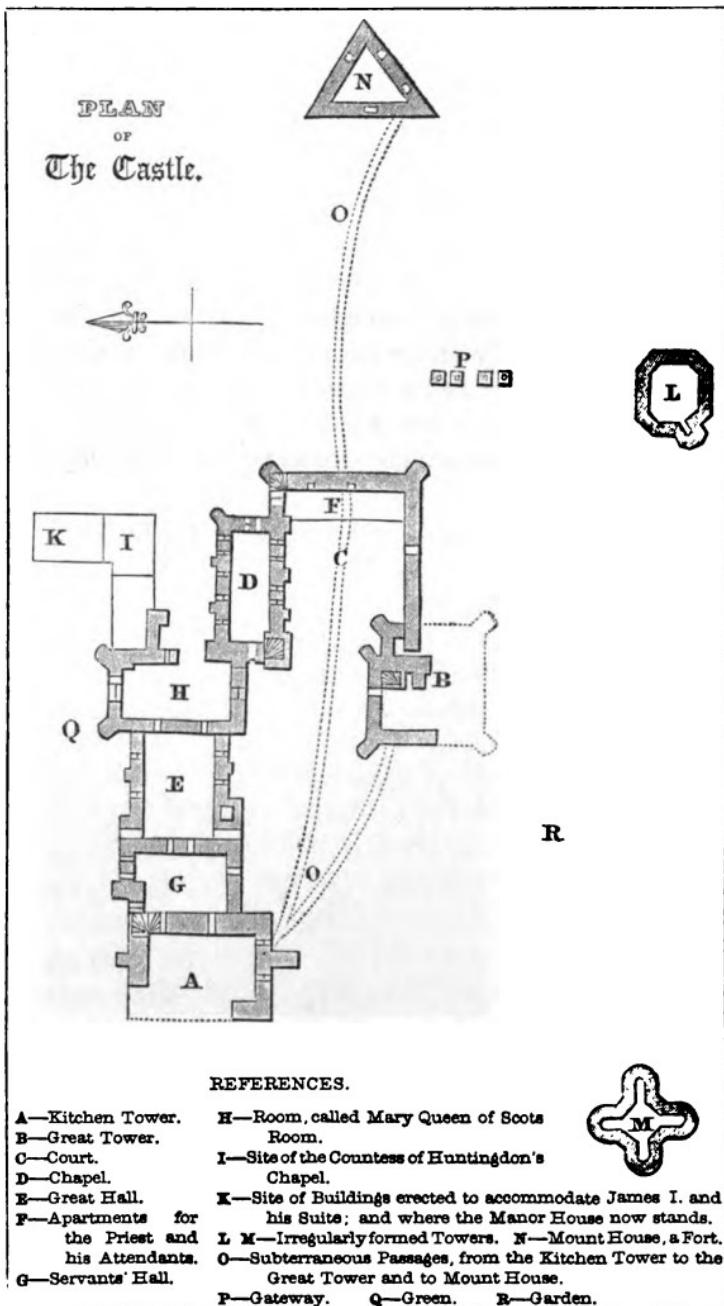
The Marquis took a peculiar interest in the prosperity of Ashby. When the accommodation for the numerous visitors to Moira Baths was found inadequate, his lordship, with the aid of his agent, the late Edward Mammatt, Esq., devised arrangements for conveying the water from Moira to Ashby, and there commenced the erection of the building now known as the "Ivanhoe Baths," of which we shall speak hereafter. The Royal Hotel was built subsequently. It was under the patronage of the Marquis that the baths acquired repute, and that Ashby became a place of fashionable resort.

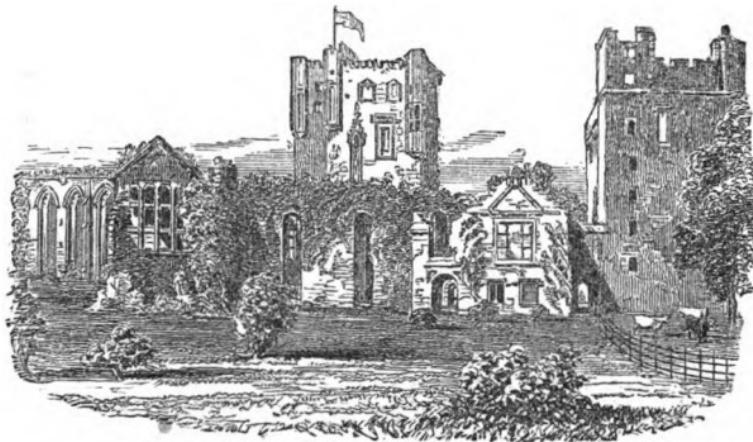
His lordship died in the year 1826, leaving the following issue—1. Flora Elizabeth, born February 11th, 1806 (since deceased); 2. Francis George Augustus, Lord Marchline (his mother's second title), born Feb. 13th, 1807, and died the following day; 3. George Augustus Francis, born Feb. 4th, 1808; 4. Sophia Frederica Christina, born Feb. 1st, 1809; 5. Selina Constantia, born April 15th, 1810; 6. Adelaide Augusta Lavinia, born Feb. 25th, 1812.

An eulogy of the Marquis appeared in the *Annual Biography* of 1828, from which these passages are selected: "To convey an adequate impression of the various qualities which adorned the Marquis of Hastings's private life, and endeared him almost enthusiastically to every one who approached him nearly, would be a difficult task. His manners were peculiarly striking. The dignity of his appearance, and the polished urbanity of his address, marked him at once as a gentleman of the highest order; his good-breeding, although perfectly refined, seemed the natural impulse of a kind disposition; and was as apparent in his intercourse with the humblest members of society as with persons of his own rank and station. To those with whom he lived in habits of intimacy and friendship, he was not contented with rendering real service whenever the opportunity occurred; he never omitted those little attentions, the interchange of which constitutes so pleasing a part of private life. His mind was richly cultivated; his information was extensive, and at the same time minute; he was an excellent scholar; and was remarkable for the purity and eloquence of his familiar language. His conversation was always interesting, and with his immediate friends and family there was frequently a playfulness in it which was peculiarly delightful. In addition to these qualities, he was blessed with the happiest temper, and possessed the most warm and generous heart; and it may be truly said of him, as it was of another great

man, that his ample fortune absolutely sank under the benevolence of his nature. He died with the most perfect resignation to the Divine will, in charity with all mankind and in those sentiments of elevated piety which had been habitual to his life."

The Marquis was succeeded by his only surviving son, George Augustus Francis, already named, who attained his majority in 1829—a circumstance which was celebrated by dinners at Ashby, Castle Donington, and elsewhere. When in his twenty-third year, he married the Baroness Grey de Ruthyn, and by her had a numerous family. He died in the year 1844. His eldest son is Paulyn Reginald Serlo, born in 1832, who accordingly attains the age of twenty-one in 1853.





North View of the Ruins of the Castle.

## CHAPTER V.

### THE CASTLE OF ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH: ITS PRESENT APPEARANCE.

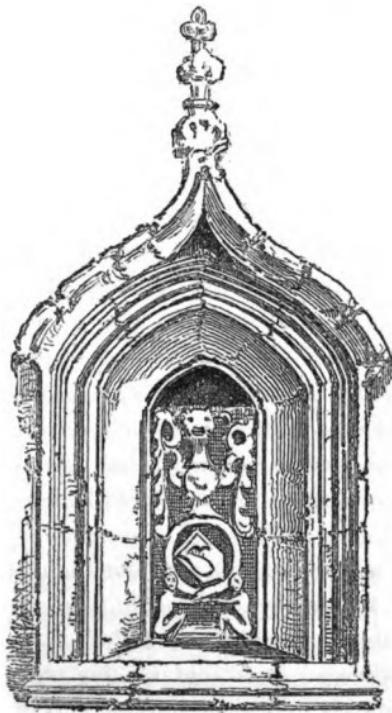
THE history of this interesting ruin has been in great part told in the earlier pages of this work: all that now remains to be done is to describe the present state of the edifice, after time and civil war have done their worst to dismantle it, and strip it of its glory.

The Castle stands on the south side of the town. It is therefore usually approached from the north-west. When viewed from the grounds of the Manor House, the pile presents the picture delineated in the above engraving. The tower on the right is known as the Kitchen Tower, and that in the centre as the Great Tower: the building on the left is the Chapel. A visitor to this spot will first approach the Kitchen Tower, which still impresses the mind with a sense of its former magnitude. On examining its details nearer he

will observe that the greater part of it is fallen to the ground, leaving only the eastern and southern sides in a state approaching completeness, while the battlements are entirely gone. On entering the area within the tower, the original design of the fabric is yet more evident. The two wide fireplaces, lying beneath equally spacious chimneys, will remind the spectator of the stories he may have read, of the ancient baronial halls, and of the monstrous fires which were once kept up within their walls. Above him he may notice the caps of the pillars whence the ribs of a vaulted roof of stone sprang upwards, and over-arched the space. Above this, again, it is not difficult to discover where a large chamber, or perhaps a set of chambers, lay upon the vaulted roof. Higher still a third story seems to have existed, which would be covered with lead, and thence a view might be had from the ancient battlements, of the surrounding country. In the angle formed by the northern and eastern walls a turret staircase conducted from the ground to the chambers and roof. The tower was nearly seventy feet high, and its walls in some places nine feet thick. Some idea of the immense size of the kitchen may be derived from the measurements of it—its height being thirty-seven feet, its length fifty, and its breadth twenty-seven. The windows have a centre mullion, with a transom across it, and foliated tracery in the heads of each light. Tradition states that Mary Queen of Scots was confined within one of the upper chambers of this erection.

The Great Tower is a grander and more imposing structure than its contemporary. It is divided into two parts. The larger originally comprised at least four stories, of which the two lower ones had arched stone roofs, and beneath them was a cellar. The first, it may be supposed was a kitchen, the second a dining room, the third a drawing room, and the fourth a chamber. The smaller division of the structure seems to have been filled up with sleeping rooms, to which and to the grand apartments access was gained by means of

a central staircase. The south wall is entirely destroyed, and parts of the eastern and western walls have fallen away. The carving about this tower is especially deserving close examination. A fire-place in the highest story is richly sculptured, and must have once formed a conspicuous ornament in the chamber in which it occupied a place. The polygonal turrets projecting from the upper parts of the angles also add to the rich effect of the tower, every side being divided into panels,



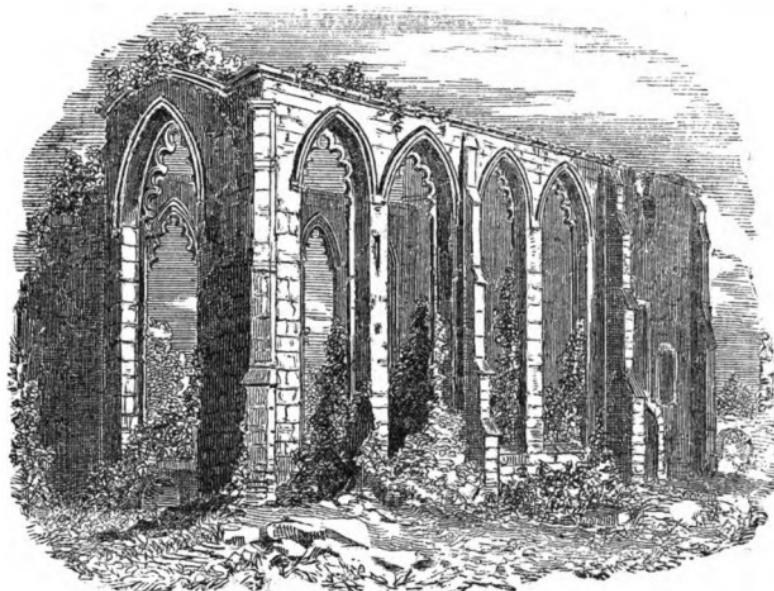
Hastings' Arms in the Great Tower.

nicely foliated, and pierced with lights. In a niche on the north side, at a considerable height in the outer face of the wall, the Hastings' arms are carved in stone, surrounded by Gothic mouldings, which terminate with a canopy and finial.

Although mutilated by time, the work still bears traces of a bold execution. The design is a shield placed diagonally within a garter, bearing a maunch (the celebrated badge of the Hastings family), the whole supported by two grotesque figures. Resting on the garter is the helmet, crested by the bull's head caboshed, around which depends what must have originally been a graceful mantling. The upper stone, which probably bore the coronet, is unfortunately missing, as will be seen by the accompanying illustration.—The sole entrance to the tower appears to have been in the lower part of this front, and was protected by a portcullis, while the battlements were bordered with overhanging machicolations, through which the inmates of the tower were enabled to pour molten lead, scalding water, hot sand, or any other destructive material, on the besiegers beneath. Any one who closely examines this structure will discover that it was compact, convenient, and impregnable to ordinary assault, in the absence of artillery. It was at once mansion and fort—serving by its isolation and strength as a keep, but affording room for domestic comfort and accommodation for a numerous retinue. This character indicates that of the age in which it was erected—warlike, but less so than the times preceding it, yet suited for a retreat in case of a return of the dangers of civil strife.

To the east of the Great Tower lies the court yard, a large open area, of which the south side is a mere boundary of defence, containing a sentinel's niche or recess, the eastern wall having served a somewhat similar purpose, with offices within the masonry. At some period a row of building has projected into the yard from the latter wall.

As soon as the visitor enters the court his attention is arrested by the Chapel, one of its sides facing the open space. It is a beautiful pile, entered by a doorway at the western extremity, from which the interior impresses the mind of the



North-East View of the Chapel.

spectator with a pleasing and imposing effect. It is high, broad, and finely proportioned, imparting an idea of space and light seldom, if ever, excelled by a building of its size. On each side are four lofty windows, enriched in the head with graceful outlines—now filled with ivy and other foliage. The altar window appears to have been larger than the others, and beneath it is an opening, the purpose of which it is difficult to divine. A staircase, leading probably to a private gallery, occupied the south-western angle of the building.

If the visitor returns from the Chapel he will observe near its door-way an entrance into another space, of which the former use is not at first sight apparent. It was probably an apartment, with an upper story; the fire-place of the latter being yet plainly visible; and within its opening, where once the cheerful cinders glowed or the burning log threw out its

bright blazes, ruin is evident, and a large fragment of stone bearing the Huntingdon arms is now placed. This relic was formerly fixed on the old Market Cross. Adjoining this part is a large spacious room, which seems to have had a stone roof arched overhead, the ribs springing from capitals to be seen on the walls: it may have served as a hall for the principal servants of the household. Of the opening between this and the Kitchen Tower, it is difficult to guess the purpose. It bears traces of having been partly built over. An aperture in the south-west corner is clearly the place through which the cooks forwarded the dishes from the Kitchen Tower to the dining rooms, and therefore the area may have been only a place for offices, common sleeping apartments, or some unimportant use.

On a glance at the plan of the Castle it would appear that a wall has run southwardly from the Kitchen Tower until it has met a wall passing westwardly from the Great Tower, thus completing the external defence and symmetry of the structure.

Leaving the Castle in a south-western direction you approach an old brick tower with stone facings and dressings, octagonal in shape; and in the south-eastern quarter is a similar structure. They seem to have been summer houses, and the foundations of a wall connecting the two buildings was discernible but a few years ago. At a distance of between two and three hundred yards from the Castle, in an eastern direction, is a strong stone building, triangular in shape, called the "Mount House." This is connected with the Kitchen Tower by a subterraneous passage, of which the entrance may be seen in the latter place, a flight of steps descending into the gloomy avenue. It has been recently discovered that the same means of communication existed between the Kitchen and Great Towers. The Mount House has evidently been an outpost of observation and defence.

The ground lying south of the Great Tower, now presenting various broken surfaces, was clearly the garden, or *plaisance*, attached to the edifice, in which the noble and courtly visitors of the ancient barons Hastings were accustomed to promenade, enjoying the scented air and balmy breezes, while the towers close by lent their protection, and re-echoed the merry laugh, or heard the tender sigh, of the amorous gallants and gentle dames whom the hospitality of the Hastingses attracted to their halls.

It may be remarked of the age of various portions of the fabric that they are of two periods—the late Gothic, and the Tudor or Jacobean. The main features are essentially of the feudal age—some of the domestic apartments alone being in the later styles. No fragment of earlier date is discoverable.

The Household Book of the Earl of Huntingdon in 1609 enables us to form some idea of the customs and aspect of his establishment in that year. The regulations it contains respecting the duties of the various officers are amusing and suggestive of the routine of the castle life. His Steward was his principal officer, the next being his Gentleman Usher; and subordinate to these were the Gentleman of the Horse, the Clerk of the Kitchen, the Cook, the Usher of the Hall, the Almoner, the Yeoman of the Pantry, the Yeoman of the Buttery, the Porter, the Yeoman of the Wardrobe, the Yeoman of the Granary, the Baker, and the Brewer. At five o'clock in the morning in summer, and six in winter, the porter opened the gates; at seven in summer, and eight in winter, one of the grooms made clean and orderly the great chamber, breakfast being had generally in private; and at eleven o'clock dinner was served. This was a scene of great ceremony and activity. The gentleman usher and some of the yeoman waiters having dined, were bound to give their attendance in the great chamber, there to wait on the Earl and his family or guests. None of the waiters were allowed to stand with their hats on

their head, or to sit or walk in the chamber, when the table was covered; and the castle gates were shut meanwhile. The hall was the place of resort for the gentlemen and yeomen, and as soon as the board in the great chamber was covered, that in the hall was prepared—the usher then, bare-headed, walked up and down to see that everything was properly arranged. Upon the appearance of the “sewer,” or server, he was ordered to say aloud, while standing at the upper end of the hall, “Gentlemen and Yeomen, wait on the Server.” When the Earl’s meat was brought to the screen, he was ready to receive the server, and then said aloud, “By your leave,” requiring all men in the hall to go on the other side of it, and to remain bare-headed, while the dish for his lordship was carried through the apartment. At six o’clock supper was served, and at nine o’clock in winter and ten in summer the gates were closed by the porter. The gentlemen and yeomen of the chamber were forbidden to play therein at cards, tables, and chess; but they might do so in the afternoon at the side-board. No drawing of swords or daggers, or wrestling, was suffered in the chamber or the hall. This was the great place of resort for the gentlemen, yeomen, and retainers of the mansion, where the Usher was bound to shew courtesy to strangers by offering them drink at the bar. The Almoner’s office was to give the remains of the meats to aged, poor, and needy people, with the help of the Usher of the Hall and the Porter; but he was not to relieve “stout rogues” and “idle persons.” Daily prayers were offered up, morning and evening, in the chapel. When the Earl walked abroad, at least one gentleman and one yeoman were bound to be in attendance. If visitors of rank came to the castle, the Gentleman Usher waited upon them on their arrival, conducted them to their chambers, and provided lodgings for their servants. Every morning, either he or one of his assistants waited upon the visitors, to ascertain what they

might want, or whether they would take breakfast. It was the Porter's duty to sit at the gate with his staff in his hand, to keep dogs out of the court-yard, to drive vagabonds and diseased people from the gates, to detain in custody all persons who might be committed to his keeping by the Earl or the principal officers, and to keep watch upon all persons entering and leaving the court-yard. The Chaplain was strictly enjoined to keep a vigilant eye over all the servants, and they were directed to repair to him for advice and instruction in the matter of religious faith.

The total sum of the Earl's yearly expenses for the year 1609 was £2,855. Fifty-five oxen cost £191 10s.; twenty-five score of sheep, £200; wine, £80; grocery, £140; coals, £80; wages of servants of all sorts, £140; hawks and hounds, £40; the earl's, countess's, and children's apparel, with rewards, gifts, and so on, £560. At this time an ox, or "beef," cost £3 10s.; and a score of sheep £8. This outline of the accounts shows that the expenditure was on a bountiful and extensive scale.



North-West View of the Parish Church.

## CHAPTER VI.

### CHURCHES AND CHAPELS.

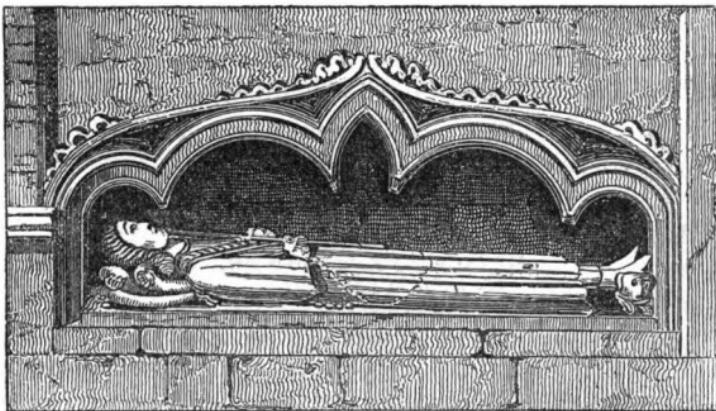
NEXT in interest to the Castle stands the Parish Church, dedicated to St. Helen, as already noticed. It is composed of a tower (containing eight bells), a nave, north and south aisles, a chancel, a chapel, and a vestry, from which a newel staircase leads to the *domus inclusa*, an apartment for a priest resident within the walls of the Church.

The edifice is approached from the north-western side, from which its tower appears a fine and prominent object.

There are entrances on the north and south sides, but the principal one is at the west end, under the tower. Within, it has the appearance of a convenient and comfortable, rather than of an imposing, structure: and the space is filled with the pews and galleries. A clerestory, with four windows on each side, lights up the nave.

Near the western entrance is yet preserved the old finger pillory, formerly used to punish disorderly church-goers and others, instead of the stocks. It is a rare—if not *unique*—specimen of the kind.

On passing beneath the gallery in the north aisle, the visitor will be shown a recumbent effigy of a Pilgrim, placed within a recess in the wall, surmounted by a depressed, ogee-shaped arch, crocketed on the exterior and cinquefoiled within, with two sets of hollow moulding, and flanked on each side of the arch by a buttress. This effigy (perhaps the only one of the kind in existence) is worthy of accurate examination. The Pilgrim is represented as bare-headed: the hair worn long and cut straight round, and combed down in the fashion prevalent in the latter part of the fifteenth century, to which period the monument may fairly be ascribed. The dress



The Pilgrim's Monument.

consists of the sclavine, the peculiar garb of pilgrims : this was a kind of cloak reaching nearly to the ancles, with short and loose open sleeves, from within which appear the full sleeves of the inner vest, or tunic, extending to the wrists. On the feet, which rest upon a dog, are worn short boots, pointed at the toes and loosely laced in front from a little above the instep upwards. The head of the figure rests upon two tasseled cushions, and between it and the right shoulder appears the pilgrim's broad-brimmed hat with an scallop or cockle-shell in front, showing that he had travelled beyond the sea. Coming down on each side of the shoulder in front of the breast is a collar of SS, clearly indicating that the person represented was a man of distinction. In front of the left shoulder may be seen his string of beads crossing the breast to the elbow on the right side. Suspended from a narrow belt crossing diagonally from the right shoulder is the Scrip, with scallop shells upon it : whilst under his left wrist passed the Bourdon, or Pilgrim's Staff, with a square knob or pommel at the head. The hands of the figure, which were raised in the attitude of prayer, are lost.



Front View.

“ Give me my *Scallop-shell* of quiet,  
My *Staff* of faith to rest upon;  
My *Scrip* of joy, immortal diet,  
My bottle of salvation;  
My *Gown* of glory, (hope's true gage,)  
And thus I'll make my Pilgrimage.”

SIR WALTER RALEIGH.

No inscription is on or near this rare and remarkable kind of monument ; so that the enquirer is left to conjecture

solely, to determine who is here commemorated, and when he was buried, but the style of the effigy and of the carving, with the collar round the neck, will help us to arrive at a conclusion. The low bend of the arch shows that the work is not of an earlier date than the middle of the fifteenth century and the collar was worn as late as that period. The personage represented was in all probability a contemporary with William, Lord Hastings. Now as that nobleman had three brothers—Richard, Ralph, and Thomas—it may have been one of these. The first was baron Welles, the second was an esquire of the body to Edward IV; of the third little appears to be known. Would it not, therefore, in all probability be an effigy of the latter?

On tablets in various parts of the church are arms and monuments in memory of Arthur Hildersam, Robert Dickenson (Mayor of Leicester in 1788), Anne Briscoe Hayes, Gerard Jaques, Thomas Bate, Anne Jackson, Ursula Davenant, and others; but too numerous to be particularized in this work.

Leland in his Itinerary (an account of an antiquarian tour of England undertaken by him at the command of king Henry VIII. about the year 1538,) says of Burton-upon-Trent, Staffordshire, that it "hath but one Paroch Chirch and a Chapel at the Bridge End. Trent compasith a great peace of the Towne. *Many Marbelers working in Alabaster.*" It is therefore probable that at Burton were executed many of the incised monumental slabs of alabaster so numerous in the Churches of the adjoining counties, supplying the places of the monumental brasses of the eastern and southern counties of England. Of these slabs that of Mundy's, represented on the next page, is a very perfect specimen. It was found in the floor of the Church when re-pewed in 1829, and is now placed upright against the south wall at the east end of the south aisle. There were others of a similar character discovered at the same time, but they were not preserved.



Mundy's Monumental Slab.

The inscription at the foot of this monument would run as follows without the contractions,—*Orate pro animabus Roberti Mundi, Elizabeth et Elizabeth uxorum ejus qui quidem Robertus obiit xb' die [mensis] Aprilis Anno Domini m'cccc'xxvi'*,—a curious specimen of Latinity, in the execution and probably composition of which the incisor seems to have been sorely perplexed, having left incomplete his abbreviation of *uxorum*. There are indications of another line of inscription, which may have recorded the date of the deaths of the said Elizabeths.

Robert Mundy is represented in a short jerkin or doublet, having over it a long side-gown with full sleeves, which partly disclose the close-fitting sleeves of the jerkin on the lower part of the arm and again hang over the wrists. His hair is long and cut straight round, after the fashion of the latter part of the fifteenth and early part of the sixteenth centuries. The wife on his right wears a pedimental head-dress formed of linen lappets; her neck is bare; and her gown is close-fitting, laced in front of the breast and at the wrists, being girt about her waist by a cincture, from which, drawn through a lion's-head slide, is pendant a pomander box for containing scent or preservatives from infection, attached to the end of it. The skirts of the gown are full. Upon her hands are large gloves. His other wife is in much the same costume. Her gown is not laced in front, nor has she a pomander box, but her girdle is buckled, and pendant from the buckle. All the figures have the broad-toed shoes of the period. Their heads rest upon small lozenge-shaped pillows, and these again upon larger square ones, below which appears to be a long bolster reaching across the slab. Above them is a rude pedimental canopy, finished by a kind of embattlement.

Robert Mundy bequeathed property in Ashby-de-la-Zouch for the perpetual sustenance of an obit in the Church of St. Helen, which was afterwards appropriated to the founding of the Free Grammar School.

Ascending the staircase to the gallery in the north aisle, the visitor will find at its eastern extremity a very curious bust of a female, who wears a high-crowned hat, beneath which is a plain cap, and around her neck a large frill; over her gown she appears to have a kind of mantle, her hands being encased in a small muff. The expression of the features is that of simplicity and kindness. It was erected in 1631, in commemoration of Mrs. Margery Wright, and bears the following



Margery Wright's Monument.

inscription :—“The Monvment of Mrs. Margery Wright, late wife to Gilbt. Wright of London, who being born in this Towne, did (ovt of her charitable and piovs disposition) give in her life time £43 to provide Gowns yearly for ever, to certain aged and poor people.\* Here she died Agvst. 11, 1623.”

\* From this gift sprung the valuable Charity hereafter described.

Near to this is a mural tablet, containing the arms of Sir Thomas Gerard, knight, formerly a servant to one of the Earls of Huntingdon. He died in the year 1634.

On the north side of the chancel is a handsome monument erected by the inhabitants to the memory of the Rev. Robert Behoe Radcliffe, M.A., late Vicar of Ashby, who died in the year 1832. It is a florid cenotaph, affectionately designed to honour that simplicity of life and doctrine for which this truly-excellent minister was so pre-eminently distinguished.

The chapel on the south side of the chancel is the burial place of the Huntingdon family; and by the mode of wains-coating and the architecture appears to have been fitted up about the end of the seventeenth century; it is observable that these and the other ornaments which are in the Roman and Grecian style, do not very well agree with the more ancient parts of the fabric.

The entrance to the family vault is by the chapel, and contains the remains of many members of this noble family; it is very large, and extends from the chapel under the chancel of the church; but it was finally closed in the year 1846—the Hastings family having discontinued this as their burial place.

The first object which claims notice upon entering the chapel, is the tomb of Francis, second Earl of Huntingdon, and his Countess, the Lady Katherine. This tomb is in that mixed style of architecture which prevailed near the end of the sixteenth century. It shows marks of our ancient modes of design, and of the Roman and Grecian additions which were then gaining such an ascendancy in all our public works. On the sides of the tomb are several ancient shields with enriched classic pilasters, pedestals, and drapery, all unaccountably joined together. The ancient tomb arrangement, however, here still predominates; for amid the shields and pilasters, are small statues of the several sons and

daughters of the deceased, placed in niches, and with their respective names underneath, according to seniority. On the top of the tomb are the recumbent statues of the noble personages here meant to be commemorated. Round the verge is this inscription:—*Here lyeth ye corps of Francys late Erle of Hutyngdon, Lord Hastynges, Hungerford, Botreaux, Molyns, & Mowles, Knight of ye honorable order of ye Garter, whiche deceased ye XXXth daye of June ao. Dni. 1561: and of ye ladie Katherin, Countesse of Hutyngdon his wife, whiche deceased ye XXXIIIId daye of Sepbr. anno Dni. 1576.*

The mouldings are sharp cut, the ornaments delicately made out, the form of the statues well imitated from the life, and the armour and the draperies finely studied from the real objects; so that from this interesting performance much information may be obtained of the progress of the arts and the costume of this kingdom. Though the tomb at present stands with its east end against the east wall of the chapel, it is probable it was originally detached from it, and was situate in the centre of this building; and that the shields which are now placed on the east wall (corresponding with those on the sides) originally decorated the east end.

The statue of the earl is clothed in exceedingly rich armour; from his shoulders depends the robe of the Order of the Garter, fastened at the neck by an elaborate worked brooch, from which fall the cordons. Over the shoulders is hung a collar of the order. On his head is a coronet bearing his crest, and his feet rest on a lion. The vestments of the Countess are of a far older make than either the fashion of the Earl's armour or the date of the tomb leads us to expect; she is habited in a loose garment brought into small folds by her girdle. Her hair appears on the forehead: and the lower part of her face is covered by the garb: under which a loose robe, fastened on the breast by the cordons, flows to the feet. From the top of her head, whereon is a coronet, a light drapery falls as low

as the elbows, adding much grace to the general effect of the costume ; her feet are supported by a griffin—a circumstance not common ; as in such instances we usually meet with one or more representations of dogs.

Over the shields at the east end of the tomb is an urn of white marble, on which the following inscription is engraven :

†  
I H S  
Theophilus Comes Huntingdonæ  
Inclytæ memoriaræ progenitorum  
Maxime Illustrum  
Quorum exuviaræ hic recordunter  
Scellum hoc decorari  
et tumulum instaurari  
pro munere extremo.  
F. F.  
**MDCXCVIII.**

On the left side of this tomb is placed a mural monument to the memory of Theophilus, ninth Earl of Huntingdon. It bears the following inscription from the pen of Lord Bolingbroke :

Here lye the Remains  
of  
The Right Honorable Theophilus, Earl of  
Huntingdon, Lord Hastings, Hungerford,  
Botreaux, Moels, Newmarc, and Molines.  
If his birth deserved respect  
His life deserved it more.  
If he derived his titles from a long Roll  
Of Illustrious Ancestors,  
He reflected back on them  
Superior Honors.  
He ennobled Nobility  
By Virtue.  
He was of the first rank of both.  
Good in every relation  
Of natural duty, and social life.  
The learning he acquired at School  
He improved at Oxford,  
Under the care of that excellent Person  
The present Bishop of Gloucester.  
Acquainted by his Studys

With the Characters of past ages,  
     He acquired by his Travels  
 A knowledge of the men and manners of his own.  
     He visited France, Italy, and even Spain.  
 After these excursions into other countrys  
     He settled in his own.  
     His own was dear to him.  
     No man had juster notions  
         Of the true constitution of her government,  
 No man had a more comprehensive view of her real interests,  
         Domestic and Foreign.  
 Capable of excelling in every form of Public life,  
     He chose to appear in none.  
     His mind fraught with knowledge,  
 His heart elevated with sentiments of unaffected Patriotism,  
     He looked down from higher ground  
 On the low level of a futile and corrupt generation.  
     Despairing to do National Good,  
     He mingled as little as his rank permitted  
         In National affairs.  
     Home is the refuge of a wise man's life,  
     Home was the refuge of his.  
 By his marriage with the Lady Selina Shirley,  
     Second daughter, and one of the Coheirs  
         Of Washington Earl Ferrers,  
     He secured to himself in retreat  
 A scene of happiness he could not have found in the World,  
     The uninterrupted joys of Conjugal Love,  
     The never-failing comforts of Cordial Friendship.  
         Every care was softened,  
         Every satisfaction heightened,  
         Every hour passed smoothly away,  
         In the company of one  
 Who enjoyed a perpetual serenity of Soul,  
     That none but those can feel in this life  
     Who are prepared for greater bliss  
         In the next.  
 By her this monument is erected,  
     To record the virtues of the deceased  
         And the grief of the living.  
         The said Earl  
 Died of a Fit of the Apoplexy,  
     October 13th, 1746,  
     In the 50th year of his age.

This monument is surmounted by a beautifully-executed bust of Selina, his Countess, well known for her zeal in

disseminating the religious tenets which she conscientiously entertained. The bust is the work of Rysbrack, a statuary of great eminence at that time, and is undoubtedly a fine resemblance of that pious lady. She died in 1791, and by her will directed her remains to be deposited in the tomb of her husband, dressed in the suit of white silk which she wore at the opening of one of her chapels; and the bulk of her property she bequeathed for the support of sixty-four chapels which she had established throughout the kingdom. She was buried in this place, but has no monument.

The west side of the chapel is occupied by a mural monument to the memory of Theophilus, seventh Earl of Huntingdon; it is of white marble, richly ornamented, and bears an inscription in Latin of considerable length. He died on the 30th of May, 1701.

In the year 1220, according to the *Matriculus*, the living was under the patronage of the Abbot of Lilleshull, who held it to his own use of old (*ab antiquo*), and connected with it was the chapel of Blackfordby. Roger, the vicar at that time, had been instituted by Hugh, the Bishop of Lincoln. In 1344 the procurations were 7*s.* 6*½d.*; the rectory was taxed at thirty marks, and paid 3*s.* for Peter's pence, the vicarage (with the chapels of Blackfordby and Wodicote) at seven marks and a half. In the year 1534-5 the procurations and synodals were 3*s.*, and the value of the vicarage £13 6*s.* 8*d.* In the year 1650 Ashby was returned as an impropriation; the rectory worth £40, the vicarage £30, and the incumbent as "sufficient." The chaplain at Blackfordby was also returned as "sufficient"—that term signifying the degree of favour they stood in with the Parliamentarian party. A pension of 13*s.* 4*d.* still continues to be paid to the Bishop of Lincoln at the "Feast of the Annunciation."

The Marquis of Hastings is patron of the living, which has a glebe of 150 acres in the parish of Ashby, and 33 acres in the

parish of Whitwick. In 1737 the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty gave £200, to meet a benefaction of £200 given by the Earl of Huntingdon, for the augmentation of the living.

Subjoined is a list of the Vicars of the Church, from the earliest date known:

DATE.	VICARS.	PATRONS.
1200 ....	Roger.....	Abbot and Convent of Lilleshull.
1224 ....	Reginald the Chaplain .....	The same.
1240 ....	Elias the Chaplain .....	The same.
1246 ....	Elias de — .....	The same.
1314 ....	.....	The same.
1364 ....	Helias de Trykingham. ....	The same.
14— ....	.....	The same.
1503 ....	John Harrison (died) .....	The same.
1504 ....	Edward Fox, Presbyter .....	Richard Chaplyn.
1508 ....	William Shelton .....	Bishop of Coventry & Lichfield.
1552 ....	George Harrison .....	Francis, Earl of Huntingdon.
	.... Anthony Gilby, M.A. ....	Henry, Earl of Huntingdon.
1582 ....	Nathaniel Gilby .....	The same.
1583 ....	Thomas Wyddowes .....	The same.
1593 ....	Arthur Hildersam, M.A. ....	The same.
1632 ....	Anthony Watson .....	George, Earl of Huntingdon.
1646 ....	William Coke .....	Ferdinando, Earl of Huntingdon.
1652 ....	Ithiel Smart, M.A. ....	The same.
1662 ....	Alexander Jones .....	Lucy, Countess of Huntingdon.
1671 ....	Gowyn Knight .....	Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon.
1673 ....	Francis Chapman .....	The same.
1676 ....	Ithiel Smart, M.A. ....	The same.
1691 ....	Henry Hooton .....	King William and Queen Mary.
1693 ....	John Lord .....	Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon.
1711 ....	Anthony Johnson .....	The same.
1715 ....	Joseph Smith .....	The same.
1721 ....	Samuel Holbrooke .....	The same.
1729 ....	Peter Cowper, M.A. ....	Francis, Earl of Huntingdon.
1783 ....	John Prior, B.D. ....	The same.
1804 ....	William M'Douall, M.A. ....	Francis, Marquis of Hastings.
1828 ....	Robert Behoe Radcliffe, M.A. ....	George, Marquis of Hastings.
1833 ....	Hon. Charles Dundas. ....	The same.
1834 ....	Marmaduke Vavasour, M.A. ...	The same.

The church underwent considerable alteration, and was re-pewed, in the year 1829, (the pews and floor being old, and

the gallery projecting too far into the body of the church, from the west end,) when the two side galleries were erected in addition—a hot air apparatus was also constructed near the north entrance, whence the flues convey the warmth to all parts of the building. These alterations cost about £1,200, which was partly raised by subscription and rate, and the other part by the rent of the pews. The organ was erected in 1771 by Hornbuckle, though since that date it has received considerable additions. It is placed in the western gallery.

The services on Sunday are at half-past ten in the forenoon, and half-past two in the afternoon from Michaelmas to Lady-day, and at three from Lady-day to Michaelmas. A Lecture is also given on Wednesday evening at half-past six, from Michaelmas to Whitsuntide.

The Vicarage adjoins the churchyard, and was entirely re-built by the late Rev. John Prior, B.D. A Library which is kept at the vicarage was given by the Rev. Richard Bate, for the use of the Vicar and his successors. The house has been greatly improved and modernized by the present incumbent, the Rev. M. Vavasour.

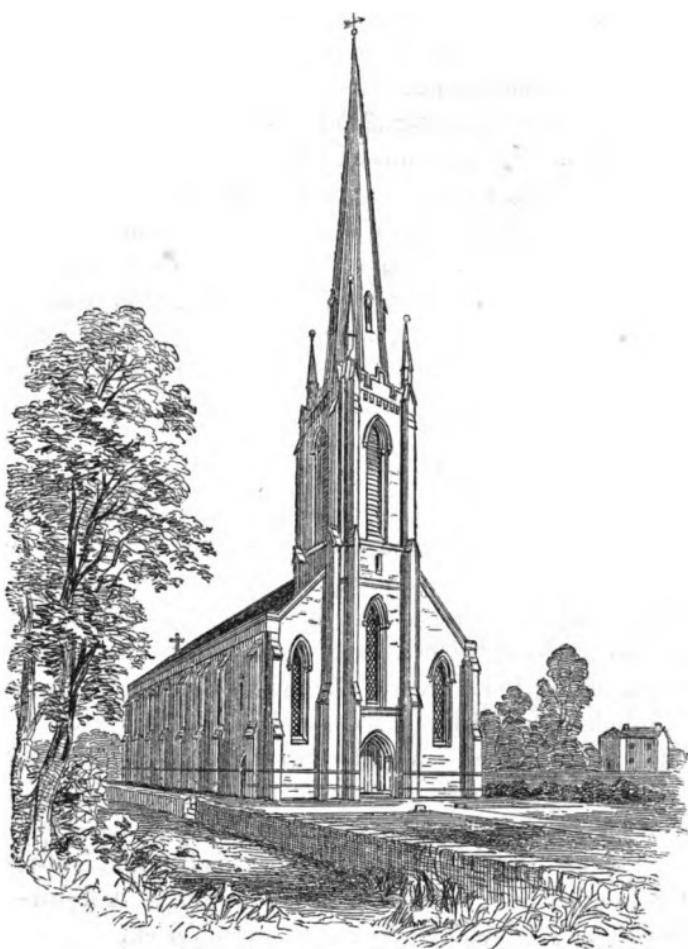
Blackfordby has immemorially been a chapelry of Ashby, and is situate about one mile and a half north-west from the parish church; its ecclesiastical endowments, with those of Ashby, were given, in 1145, to the Abbey of Lilleshull, which retained them until the dissolution of monastic establishments. Under the year 1220, it is recorded that the Abbot of Lilleshull, who held the patronage of Ashby to his own use, had also the chapel of Blackfordby; where divine service was performed three times a week by the clergy of the mother church. On Sundays, the Vicar of Ashby or his curate does duty in the chapel, which is a very ancient structure, without any distinction of nave and chancel. The lancet windows, the old round font of stone, the rude open



Blackfordby Chapel.

seats, and head of St. Margaret (to whom the chapel is said to have been dedicated,) in stained glass in the east window, are objects of interest. Originally its site may have been chosen on account of its secluded beauties and salubrity. It overlooks an extensive and luxuriant landscape, and rests upon a rock which pours forth a copious spring. The Marquis of Hastings is Lord of the manor of Blackfordby and patron of the living.

TRINITY CHURCH.—This was erected from the designs of Henry I. Stevens, Esq., of Derby. It is an elegant stone structure in the early English style of architecture, and consists of a nave 70 feet by 46 feet 6 inches, a recess at the east end 22 by 9 feet for the communion table, flanked by a vestry and porch. The principal entrance is under the tower, which is 11 feet square within and 65 feet high, with double rectangular buttresses. The side entrances and staircases to the galleries are on the right and left of the tower, and correspond externally with the nave. It stands at the western end of the town, and is seen as a conspicuous object by the visitor on entering it from the Railway Station. The first stone was laid by the Earl Howe, on the 25th of August,



Trinity Church.

1838, in the presence of the Bishop of Lincoln; and it was consecrated by the Bishop of Peterborough, on the 13th of August, 1840: the county of Leicester, in the meantime, having been transferred to the diocese of the latter. It contains upwards of nine hundred sittings, two-thirds of them

being free. The entire cost of the building was £3,643 4s. 4d., which was raised as follows: Church Building Society £450, the Church Commissioners £400, Leicester Diocesan Society £200, proceeds of a bazaar £553 12s. 4d., and subscriptions about £2040. The spire was added at the instance of E. M. Green, Esq., who, with some small contributions of friends, furnished the amount required. The site was given by the Marquis of Hastings. The endowment was obtained from the following sources: Curates' Aid Society £500, from subscriptions and a bazaar £1,000, and further subscriptions amounting to £250 to meet a grant of £200 from the Governors of Queen Anne's Bounty; making a total endowment fund of £1,950.

**THE INDEPENDENT CHAPEL.**—In the year 1725, James Richards, Esq., of Ashby, erected a chapel in Kilwardby-street, for the use of the Independent denomination. Just one hundred years after, it was found necessary to take down this building and erect the existing one on the same site. The front is of cement with a stone portico, supported by two columns of the Doric order. The interior will accommodate four hundred and fifty persons, and is neatly pewed: it is divided by two aisles. A gallery over the porch is left with open seats. The house in front of the chapel, which is intended for the residence of the minister, was purchased by the congregation. Services take place on the Sabbath at half-past ten in the morning, and at six in the evening. A lecture is delivered on Wednesday evening at seven o'clock.

**THE METHODIST CHAPEL.**—This is a neat but commodious building, with three galleries. The body of it has open seats and the galleries are fitted with close pews; it is capable of seating five hundred persons. Previous to the erection of this place of worship, the Wesleyan Methodists assembled in a licensed building opposite to the present chapel, which it appears had been used by this denomination nearly from

the time of its founder, the Rev. J. Wesley. There are two Ministers appointed by the Annual Conference, who reside in the town. The Superintendent Minister lives in the house adjoining the chapel. The Circuit includes about thirty chapels in the immediate neighbourhood, which are regularly visited by the Ministers and their assistants on Sundays and other days for public worship. Service on the Sabbath at ten o'clock in the morning, and at six in the evening; also, on Thursday evening at seven o'clock.

**THE BAPTIST CHAPEL.**—This place of worship, situate in Mill-lane, was built in 1817 and enlarged in 1832. It is capable of containing three hundred persons. Originally, the chapel was a dwelling-house, hired by the congregation in 1798.

**THE PRIMITIVE METHODIST CHAPEL,** stands between the Green and Calais. It was erected in the year 1833.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL: ITS ORIGIN—NATURE OF THE ENDOWMENT—THE DAY-BELL HOUSES—INCREASE IN VALUE OF THE SCHOOL PROPERTY—CHANCERY PROCEEDINGS IN CONNECTION WITH THE INSTITUTION—EXTRACTS FROM THE OLD ACCOUNT BOOK OF THE CHARITY—ERECTION OF A NEW SCHOOL-HOUSE—SALARIES OF THE VARIOUS MASTERS—TERMS OF ENTRANCE TO THE SCHOOL—EXHIBITIONS IN CONNECTION THEREWITH—LAW PROCEEDINGS SINCE 1807, ETC.

THE GRAMMAR SCHOOL in this place is its most important foundation. Its origin is involved in some obscurity, for although the Deed apparently creating the charity bears date the 10th of August, 1567, it is quite certain that there was a school in existence at that time, and for many years previously; and the better opinion seems to be that it was originally established by the Commissioners under the celebrated statute of King Edward VI., as from the description of the charity property in the Deed of 10th of August, 1567, several of the houses are described as having been formerly given to maintain "obits," and two of the granting parties in that Deed (Robert Brookesbye and Nicholas Asheby) are known to have been Commissioners under the statute, 1st Edward VI. cap. 14. A "School House" is mentioned in the foundation deed of 1567, and there are documents in existence at Donington Park (the seat of the Marquis of Hastings) shewing that some of the property conveyed by the Deed of 1567 was previously vested in Trustees for Ashby School.

To the generous piety and zealous philanthropy, however, of the seventh Earl of Huntingdon, the inhabitants of Ashby

are for the most part indebted for one of the most valuable endowments in the kingdom. The property conveyed by the Deed of 1567, consisted originally of twenty-six houses in Ashby, and a small quantity of land, producing an annual rental of less than £12. The trusts of the deed were “to the intent that the feoffees should out of the rents and profits of the premises for ever thereafter find, maintain, and support an able master, teacher, and instructor, to teach, instruct, and inform youths, infants, and little ones—(*‘infantes, pueros, et parvulos,’*) in good manners, learning, knowledge, and virtue—(*‘bonis moribus, litteris, scientia, et virtute,’*)” in a proper place for that purpose to be assigned within the town of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

About thirty years after the date of the foundation deed of this charity, a property, now consisting of two messuages and several cottages in Ashby, became vested in the Trustees of Ashby School, in a manner which is dependent upon tradition for its history. It is said that an inhabitant on his return to the town lost his way, and wandered nearly all night in great peril; that when he had become almost exhausted and well nigh fainted for fear, the sound of the church clock in the tower of St. Helen's reached his ear; and that guided by its friendly note he was enabled to reach the right path, arriving at home in safety. Gratitude for this deliverance, coupled probably with a superstitious feeling, induced this individual to convey to the Trustees the property before mentioned upon certain trusts; one of which was that the Trustees should cause one of the church bells to be rung for a quarter of an hour at four o'clock every morning. This direction was implicitly carried out, and the “four o'clock bell” was regularly rung every morning until the year 1807, when, upon the authority of a decree in a suit in the Court of Chancery for extending the objects of the charity, this

custom, "useless and annoying" to the inhabitants, was discontinued. The property is still known as the Day-bell Houses, but otherwise it is a part and parcel of the charity estates, and the rents are applied in the same manner as those of the other part of the property. The first mention of the incorporation of this gift with the school property is in the year 1628, when the following entry appears: "Received for the rent of the Day-bell House, which is hereafter to be paid yearly to the Feoffees, 16s."

The great increase in the value of the school property from the foundation of the charity to the present time is most striking. The reserved rents under the Deed of 1567 appear to have been about £12. In 1596 they were £20 9s. 3d., at which sum they continued until the year 1683, when leases for a term of forty years were agreed upon, and the reserved rents of the school property were increased to £41 8s. 1d., and of the Day-bell House to £2. In the year 1719 another arrangement was made with the tenants, and the rents of the "School and town land" were raised to £51 11s. 10d.; and of the Day-bell House to £4. In 1757 an increase of one-third was made "according to the agreement entered into between the master and the school tenants, with the approbation of the Earl of Huntingdon and the Feoffees of the said School." This raised the "School rents and Day-bell House" to £73 0s. 6d.; and leases were granted for a further term of forty years.

When these leases were about to expire, the Earl of Moira, who had shortly before succeeded to the large possessions of his uncle, Francis, Earl of Huntingdon, being dissatisfied with the mode in which the charity had been conducted, and being desirous of extending its objects, became the relator in a suit in the Court of Chancery against the Trustees and Master of the school. A Decree was made in this suit in the

year 1802, and in 1807 the Master's Report was confirmed ; whereby the rents were raised to £357 13s. 0d. In the year 1827, upon the expiration of the then existing leases, the rents were raised to £850 ; and again at Lady-day, 1848, the rents were further raised to £1,168 ; leases for a further term of twenty-one years being then granted.

The great increase in the rental of this property has not arisen from the same cause which has made the Bedford, Rugby, Birmingham, and other Grammar Schools, so wealthy, namely, the peculiar locality of land which has been let on building leases ; but as it would appear, principally from improvements by the lessees. For a very considerable period the lessees seem to have claimed a sort of freehold interest in the property. They assumed to settle the rents to be paid by arrangement with the Head Master, subject to the approbation of the Trustees, it is true ; but looking at the slow increase from 1567 to 1797, compared with what has since followed, it is evident that the tenure has been of a peculiar nature. However the system may have tended ultimately to increase the value of the trust property, it is most certain that it was a great abuse of the charity during its creation. For nearly a century prior to the confirmation of the master's report in 1807, the school was in its usefulness almost a cypher ; as at that time there were not more than four or five boys who attended the school : and their instruction was confined to the learned languages only. The present position of the school will be shown hereafter.

In a curious old account book in the possession of the Trustees of this charity, commencing in the year 1594, and which contains an apparently very accurate statement of the receipts and disbursements of the School Trustees from that period down to the year 1768, are several entries of an interesting character ; some of which, as tending to illustrate the social condition of the period when they occurred, as

well as to explain the history and progress of this charity, are here given.

"1605, April 2. Paid towards the making of the Market Cross, £3 15s. 11d.  
 1606, April 22. Towards the making of the Market Cross, £3 3s. 6d.  
 Sept. 29. Received of the Tenants towards the making of a new Feoffment, £1 17s. 6d. Spent in Ale at the Sealing of the Feoffment, 4d.

For two Sugar Loaves that were given by the towne to my Lord, 1604, £1 8s. 4d.

1608. Towards the making of Alton Bridge, 15s. 8d.

1616, April 30. Memorandum: That Mr. Brinsley craying of us the Feoffees for the School Land that wee would take order for the repair of the School House, wee did consent to allow him for this tyme 30s. towards the repair thereof, yet with this protestation, that as wee did allow it unto him not as a thing wee held ourselves anyway bound unto, but as a meer benevolence and gratuity: Soe wee would not be hereby bound to doe the like hereafter. In witness whereof wee have set our hands to this note of remembrance the yeare and day above written.

Arth. Hildersam.	Thomas Sherwood.
Rob. Bainbrigg.	Rob. Clark.
Rob. Newton.	Will. Ashe.
Nich. Haskey.	John Ashe.

1617, Nov. 1. Paid for a Chest to keep the Evidences of the School Land in, with three lockes and keyes, £1 1s. 1d.

1620, Nov. 6. Paid for 400 of Brick for repairinge of the floore in the School house, and for carriage of it, 7s. 11d.; and paid for two loads of Lime and the carriage, 17s.

1623, Nov. 7. Paid for a load of Barrow Lime towards the repairing of the School house, and for carriage of it, 10s. 4d."

**Mr. Arthur Hildersam's accounts as Collector of the School Lands appear in the year 1629.**

"1632, Dec. 11. Paid to William Cox for the Superscription upon Minshew his Dictionary given by Mr. Arthur Hildersam for the use of the Schoole, 1s.

1634, Nov. 12. For makinge my Lord's Arms and setting them up in the School-house, and for a Curtaine, £2 14s. 9d.

1637, Jan. 19. Paid for a Frame and Curtaine for the Countis of Huntingdon's Arms, 1s. 6d.

1638, Dec. 18. Paid to John Proudlive for three days' work and a half, 3s. 4d.

1643, Dec. 28. Paid for removeinge the Chests and Bookes from the School-house, 1s.

1647, Jan. 10. Paid to Thomas Ryce, the Clark, for ringing the Day-bell Curfew and looking to the Clocke, &c., 19s.

This is the first mention of the Curfew—the same charge continues yearly down to 1682.

" 1650, Dec. 16. Paid for casting down the Bulwarke at the School-house Close and laing the Stone by, 13s. 4d.; and for laing up the posts, 4d."

This was after the death of King Charles I., and during the Commonwealth.

" 1654. Received now by me, William Robbins, for the use of the Schoole the sum of £8. This is for wood that was sold for the Vicarage house.

Disbursed towards the repaires of the Church Chamber, and other things, £4 2s. 8d.

1655, Dec. 21. Disbursed for Seates and Formes and other repaires about the Schoole, as appears by a bill of particulars, £6 11s. 2d.

1656, Dec. 2. Disbursed for makeing up the price of a Dictionary given by Mr. Simeon Ashe to the School, 5s. 8d. For glazeing the School Windows, being now kept in the Vicar's Chancel, 4s. Spent when Mr. Ashe was last here, 8s. 2d."

When the Cromwellian party had obtained the control of this charity and ousted the former Trustees, after the accounts for the year ending 1658 are the following entries :

"The Names of those that required us that are Feoffees to for baer to act as Feoffees, and that took upon themselves to act for the Schoole, and this blank paper is for them if they please to enter their accompts : (*quando necio.*)"

Here follow the names of Ithiel Smart and thirteen others.

"Memorandum: That wherasse the Feoffees were by an order commanded not to act any further in discharge of theire trust until further order, it being in the yeare of our Lord God 1657. And the said Feoffees forbaering to act anything any further until the year of our Lord 1660, have left the blank paper before for the Feoffees who pretended to act in our absence to enter their accompts, and from the 21st December, 1660, wee beginn againe to proceed to the discharge of our trusts.

1662, Dec. 24. Received for an old Brass Pott, weighing fourteen pounds, sold at 5d. per pound, 5s. 10d. Paid for a Ferrilaw, 2d. Spent with the Schoolmaster, 6d.

1664, Dec. 21. Received for an old Press, 10s.

1666, Dec. 21. Disbursed for makeing a Cubboard to lay the Schoole bookes in, 7s. 10d.

1668. Disbursements: Item, the repaire of the Earle's Armes, 8d."

Mr. Samuel Shaw was appointed sole Schoolmaster of the Free School of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Jan. 5th, 1668, and the trustees by a memorandum of this date,

"doe promise to pay unto Mr. Shaw aforesaid, whilst he doth officiat School-

maister at Ashby-de-la-Zouch aforesaid, at the Free Schoole aforesaid, the yearly rent of £18 13s. 6d. at two usual payments in the yeare as they shall grow due from the tenants of the School Land."

In 1672 a balance of 18s. 9d. is shown in the accounts, "which was given unto Mr. Shaw towards the repaire of the Schoole, provided that if there be a new Feoffment within twelve moneth from the date hereof Mr. Shaw doth promise to pay 20s. towards the charges of drawing it.

1674. Received of Mr. Shaw towards the new Feoffment, £1."

In the Feoffment immediately preceding this, and which was made within two years after the former feoffment, there are two surviving Feoffees only, "the rest," as recited in the deed, "being dead suddenly of the plague."

" 1675. Imprimis: Spent upon the Feoffees at the meeting of the Right Honorable Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon, about producing our Title to the Debell House, 1s. Item, for drawing the Feoffment of the Day-bell House, 8s.

1676. Payed to ye Sexton, Samuel Smith, for ringing Debell and Curfew and looking to the Clock and Chymes, £1 15s.

1679, Dec. 22. Paid for two gallons of Wine for a present to the Earl of Huntingdon at a meeting of the School Tenants, 8s.

1682, Dec. 21. Item, for altering the Locke of the Schoole door, and a new Locke and a Catch and Latch, done by John Mathews, 4s. 6d.

1683, Jan. 17. Paid 3s. for sixty Thacksheaves for the School-house use, and 2s. for Bricks that Allin carried from Smithesby, and 6d. that Anthony Throne had for drawing John Allin's Carte out of the Broad Brooke, and 6d. for bringing up to the Schoole House 140 Thack Sheaves.

1715, Dec. 21. Paid Mr. Lynes by order of Dr. Gery, Guardian to the Right Honorable the Earl of Huntingdon, advanced School rents, being £20 14s. 10d.

1719. Paid Mr. Piddocke for new Feoffment and Counterpart, £2.

1736. Spent at the Monthly Meeting of the Justices at Mount Sorehill in defence of Dale against Lawrence, 11s. 3d.

1750, Dec. 21. Charge, one half-year's School Rent at the old rate, £25 17s. 10d.

One half-year's Rent, one-third being added to the same according to the agreement entered into between the Master and the School Tenants, with the approbation of the Earl of Huntingdon and the Feoffees of the said School, £34 10s. 6d."

The site of the original School and School-house is not accurately known, but tradition says that it was somewhere near the present Vicarage House. They were destroyed at the time the Castle was dismantled, during the Interregnum;

and shortly after the Restoration, a school and school-house were erected on the spot where the present head master now resides, and so continued until the year 1807, when upon the decree for the extension of the charity being obtained, the old school and schoolmaster's house were pulled down and the present house erected; the school being built separate from the master's house and in its present questionable position. The charity now became greatly extended; a Head Classical Master was appointed, with a salary of £150 a-year, an English Master with a salary of £100, and an Usher with a salary of £40. The number of boys in the Classical School increased, and those in the English School numbered nearly one hundred.

By the scheme for its management under the Decree of 1831 the School is now under the control and direction of the Trustees, without the interposition of any Visitor. All the male children of inhabitants of the parish of Ashby are entitled to the benefit of the foundation: but the Trustees do not admit any under the age of seven years, nor then unless they can read fluently a portion of a chapter in the New Testament.

There is in the Classical School a Head Master, with a salary of £150 a-year, and whenever there are more than twelve boys (exclusive of boarders) taught in the school, then as many additional yearly sums of £6 as will be equal to the number of boys beyond twelve so educated, provided such additional sums do not amount to more than £70 in any one year. The Head Classical Master has also (besides a good house) the privilege of taking not more than twelve boys as boarders. There is also a Classical Assistant, with a salary now paid of £100 a-year.

In the English School, which is kept separate from the Classical School, there is a Head Master with a salary of £100, and the same additional salary by way of head-money

of £2 for each boy beyond 75, provided his salary from such addition does not exceed £100. There is also a second English master with a salary of £100, and an Assistant with £70. None of the English masters have residences found them, nor are they allowed to take boarders.

This system of head-money for additional scholars on the foundation, has been found to answer well in other schools, and it certainly has prospered here; as in no year since the scheme came into operation has either of the head masters received less than his full quota.

The education too is strictly free, as the Trustees by the scheme are empowered to find all printed and other books, pens, paper, slates, coals, candles, and other conveniences for the use of the school-rooms and the boys to be educated therein.

The Trustees have also power to grant two Exhibitions of £40 a-year to boys going off from the school to any college in either of the Universities of Oxford or Cambridge, upon terms to be prescribed by them. Besides this advantage there are ten Exhibitions of £10 each at Emmanuel College, Cambridge, for boys educated at this school and at the Free Grammar School at Derby, founded by the late Mr. Francis Ashe. The Trustees at Christmas, 1850, elected Mr. Hughes as the first exhibitioner; and they have subsequently nominated him for one of the £10 Exhibitions at Emmanuel College.

The present prosperous state of the school has not been obtained without many difficulties and hindrances. From the nature of the foundation deed, and from the practical use of the funds of the charity, previous to the year 1807, a notion seems to have prevailed that it was purely a Grammar School; that there could only be one master, and that he was entitled to the whole rents of the charity estates. This question was first raised by the Rev. Robert Watkin Lloyd,

who, in the year 1814, being the Head Master of the School, was forcibly expelled by the Trustees; but presented his petition to the Court of Chancery to be reinstated. The cause came on before Lord Chancellor Eldon, whose predilections in favour of a strict interpretation of a founder's intentions according to the letter of the foundation deed, are well known. No final judgment was ever given in this cause, owing to Mr. Lloyd having removed to another appointment; and, without casting any reflection on the memory of Lord Eldon, we may congratulate the inhabitants of Ashby that such was the case.

The Rev. J. Curtis subsequently became the Head Master (whether a temporary or permanent one was for many years a vexed question), and in 1827 filed a bill in Chancery against the Trustees and other parties interested in the charity, whereby he sought to upset the decree of 1807, and to have the charity declared to be purely a Grammar School. Shortly after this, Sir Charles Abney Hastings, Bart., became the relator in another suit, wherein he sought to carry out the decree of 1807, and to have the charity extended in accordance therewith, and with the founder's intention as evidenced by the foundation deed and the practice of the charity subsequently. These causes came on to be heard before Lord Chancellor Brougham on the 30th and 31st of May, 1831, and on the following day (June 1st) he gave a lengthened judgment, which took him six hours to deliver, in which he dismissed Mr. Curtis's suit with costs, and made a decree in Sir C. Hastings's suit in accordance with the prayer of the bill. It is under this decree that the School is now governed, and it is to be hoped that all litigation affecting the origin, nature, or administration of the charity, has now for ever ceased. Mr. Curtis resigned the office of Head Master before the present scheme for the management of the School came into operation. The present Head Master is the Rev. T. S. Green, M.A.

It is a most valuable endowment, and several families have settled in the town with a view to obtain the benefit of it; nor can it be doubted that as its advantages become more publicly known and appreciated, many other families will be induced to do so. The School, as before stated, is confined to the male children of the inhabitants of the parish of Ashby, and is now in a most prosperous state, there being every reason to be well satisfied with the administration of the charity in all respects.

## CHAPTER VIII.

SCHOOLS: BLUE AND GREEN COAT—NATIONAL AND INFANT, AND SUNDAY SCHOOLS. CHARITIES: WILLIAM LANGLEY'S—FRANCIS ASHE'S—MARGERY WRIGHT'S—HENRY CURZON'S—SIMEON ASHE'S—ELIZABETH WILKINS'S—MARY BEAVINGTON'S—BREAD, CONSOLIDATED, AND LOST CHARITIES.

FROM the history of the Free School, we turn the reader's attention to an account of other institutions of a similar description, as well as of other charities founded by benevolent persons for the benefit of the poorer inhabitants of the town; and we think we shall not be saying too much when we add, that few towns of its size can boast of such a goodly array.

BLUE AND GREEN COAT SCHOOLS.—Mr. Isaac Dawson, the founder of the Blue-Coat Charity, was the son of Mr. John Dawson, who lived in the principal street in Ashby, in the house for many years inhabited by the late Rev. J. Piddocke. Mr. Isaac Dawson was a lawyer. His portrait, with that of his wife (a lady named Fowler, of Hugglescote, sister of the Rev. Joseph Fowler), are now in the possession of T. Willey, Esq., of Coleorton. They are represented in the dresses they respectively wore when presented at court. Mr. Dawson had an honest, open, intelligent countenance. In his portrait, taken apparently when he was between 20 and 30 years of age, he is dressed in a blue coat (without collar), scarlet waistcoat, and ruffles, holding a scroll in his hand, and wearing a wig. Mrs. Dawson's costume is characteristic of the period, and, strangely enough, nearly approaches to that

worn in the present day. On her head she has a small cap of Brussels lace, with dark flowing hair, and her dress is of light silk, elegantly embroidered with the needle.

The story connected with the foundation of the Blue-Coat School is, that Mr. Dawson, when on his journey to York, was stopped and bound by three highwaymen, whom he afterwards succeeding in discovering. They were convicted and executed for the offence, and under the law then existing, Mr. Dawson became entitled to receive the sum (£40) payable on a capital conviction for highway robbery; but probably from thankfulness at his escape, and unwillingness to enjoy the money he obtained through the death of others, he resolved on applying it to the foundation of a public school, and payment for the preaching of an annual sermon, commemorative of his deliverance from death or murder. In 1721 the School House was purchased for £45, which was raised by subscription of the inhabitants of the town. About £30 per year, including the interest of Mr. Dawson's endowment, was also raised by the same means; and this sum having exceeded the expenditure, the surplus was from time to time invested in land and other securities, till the year 1764, when the subscriptions ceased, the accumulations and benefactions being found sufficient for its support. The chief benefactors to the school, besides Mr. Dawson, have been the Rev. Thomas Bate, Mr. Piddocke, Lady Frances Hastings, and Mr. Newton of Lichfield; and the land belonging to it is in the parishes of Whitwick, Rosalston, Barwell, and Donisthorpe. The total income is £49 15s. 8d. The master is required to instruct twenty-six boys, who are admitted at the age of seven or eight years; and are clothed in blue coat, waistcoat and trowsers, with cap and pair of bands.

The garters with which Mr. Dawson was bound by the highwaymen are preserved by Mr. Willey, with the knots yet untied, and with a note explanatory of the circumstances of

the robbery, of which the following is a copy, for which we are indebted to Mr. Willey's courtesy :—

“ Hon<sup>d</sup> Father,

“ These may satisfie you that I am through Mercy safe returned from York, which Jorney has been somewhat difficult; for about half a mile from Nott<sup>m</sup> I overtook 3 highwaymen, with whom I traveled about 3 mile, when they stopped me and tould me they must have my moneys, which they took from me with my watch, &c., horse and whip and gloves, and tyed my hands behind me and my legs together—so left me; but I quickley loosed myself and persued them. When I had gone about 7 miles a foot, I mett with one of their horses, which I monted; and when I came to ye next town I got 3 men to go along with me in persuit of 'em, but they haveing fresh horses ouer-red me, so yt I was forced to go by myself. When I came almost to Blyth, I mett one of ye 3 men coming back again, who told me ye other two went 2 several ways in persuit of 'em, but they both returned home without takeing 'em. When I came to Blyth I borrowed w<sup>t</sup> money I thought shd want, so went forwards for Bautry, where I tooke post for Donkaster, and from thence for Ferry-bridg; but in the way to Ferry-bridg is a town called West Bridg, where I happend to hear of 'em, so called assistance, and sizd them. The next day went with 'em before a justice, who committed 'em to York gaol. I hope shall see you here next week; then shall give you a more perticuler account. I am, w<sup>t</sup> Duty to self and love to Br and Sisr.

“ Yr. obd. Son,

“ Nott., Jan. 5, 1714-15.”

I. Dawson.”

A postscript of a private nature follows the letter.—Mr. Dawson's descendant, Isaac Dawson Bloomer, now a youth, son of the late I. D. Bloomer, Esq., is the sole representative of the worthy and benevolent founder of the Blue-Coat School at Ashby.

The Green-Coat School was founded in 1769 by Alderman Newton of Leicester, for twenty-five boys; who are clothed in green coat, waistcoat and trowsers, with cap and pair of bands. The yearly income is £35 15s. 3d.

For a long period the two Schools have been united under one master; by whom the boys are taught in a room capable of holding 150 scholars. The master's house is attached to the School, which is situate in Lower Church-street. The scholars of both are required to be children of parents who are parishioners of Ashby and members of the Church of England. They are instructed in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and provided with stationery, but find their own books. The master is allowed to take other scholars.

THE NATIONAL AND INFANT SCHOOLS were erected in 1836, at an expence of £1,039, including the School House adjoining: £250 of this sum was a grant from the Treasury, £413 was raised by subscription, and £374 was part of the proceeds of a bazaar. The site was given by the Marquis of Hastings. The National School is for girls only, whose education is free, and it affords room for 150 scholars. The Infant School will accommodate 300. Both schools are supported by subscriptions, annual collections after sermons in the two Churches, and by a small weekly payment from the scholars of the Infant School.

SUNDAY SCHOOLS connected with the Established Church are held in the National and Blue-Coat Schools, and average about 300 scholars. There are also Sunday Schools attached to the Independent, Wesleyan, Baptist, and Primitive Methodist Chapels.

Of the Charities there are several, concerning which a few statements are here necessary:

WILLIAM LANGLEY'S CHARITY dates from the year 1695, in which the founder bequeathed his college lease in Dise-worth to be sold, the money arising therefrom to be applied

for ever to pay for the instruction in reading English, of twelve poor boys or girls out of the parish of Ashby, and six out of Diseworth, in some school in that village or an adjoining town. The boys were to be taught for three years only, an allowance of  $1\frac{1}{2}d.$  per week to be made to the master for each boy. At the end of the first year  $2d.$  was to be given to each boy, therewith to purchase a Catechism; and at the expiration of three years,  $1s.$  to purchase the "Alarm to the Unconverted," or some other such "good book," with  $3s.$  to buy a Bible. The property consisted of a house and about 33 acres of land. The trustees did not obey the directions contained in the will, but took renewed leases of the property; and in 1812 sold it for £380, which, with an accumulation of interest, making the total £440, was lent to the trustees of the Independent Chapel on the security of their note of hand. The note is made payable on demand, and £18 yearly is returned upon it. Both the Ashby and Diseworth schools are held in the houses of the school-mistresses, who are appointed by the trustees.

FRANCIS ASHE granted, in the year 1654, to the Feoffees of the lands belonging to the Free Grammar School in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, out of certain lands and hereditaments, the yearly sum of £20, to be paid on the 25th of March and the 29th of September every year, towards the maintenance of a weekly lecture in the Parish Church. And, after founding ten exhibitions of £10 each, for ten boys belonging to Emmanuel College, Cambridge, it was declared that they should be chosen out of the scholars in the Common Free School in the town of Derby, by the mayor of that town, the ministers of two of its parishes, the chief schoolmaster and usher of the school, or any three of them (the Mayor being one) out of such of the scholars as may have been brought up at that school for one year previous to the date of the selection. If, however, there should not be so many there, so qualified, then

the remainder of the ten scholars are to be chosen from those in training in the Free School at Ashby. The estate is now in the possession of the Master and Fellows of Emmanuel College, and consists of a house and nearly 588 acres of land in the county of Norfolk. Exhibitions have been occasionally granted to boys from the Ashby Grammar School, but the College for the most part reaps the whole benefit of this valuable gift.

The charity known as "MARGERY WRIGHT'S CHARITY" is involved in some obscurity as to its original foundation. The Deed apparently founding the charity is a grant from Henry, Earl of Huntingdon, dated the 10th of April, 1630, of lands at Newtown; and annexed to the grant are articles declaratory of the objects. By these it is provided, "that £14 of the profits should be employed yearly to provide gowns for five poor folk in Ashby-de-la-Zouch, to be notified as the gift of Mrs. Wright; and that the remainder of the profits should be employed in providing gowns for other poor folk, or some other way as the Feoffees for the time being should judge to be most for the behoof and benefit of the poor of Ashby: and that such of the poor should have gowns bestowed upon them as are the most aged and in the greatest necessity, and as are known to be such as do most ordinarily come to the Church both on the Sabbath and on Lecture days, and in every other way unblamable in their conversation: also, that such poor folk as receive any of the said gowns be incapable of any more of the said gowns for three years after." An addition was made to this property in 1669, and the charity estate now consists of a moiety of a farm of about 84 acres, in Newtown Unthank, realizing about £124 yearly, and land on Ashby Woulds producing £12 yearly. A small portion of land in Sheepshed produces £3 annually. This charity is also entitled to two sums of £50 each which are respectively secured, with interest at the rate of £5 per

cent. per annum, upon the tolls of the Tamworth and Sawley Road. Part of these sums arose from savings from the income of the charity, and the remainder was made up of the following amounts, received by the trustees from other parochial charities :

£5 from Hackett's Charity, in 1719,

20 " Sykes's " .. 1726,

6 " Aspinshaw's " .. 1730,

20 " Clark's " .. 1730,

20 " Lynn's " .. 1742,

and 5 " Muxloe's " .. 1750; making a total of £76. Interest at the rate of £5 per cent. per annum, has been annually paid to the Churchwardens and Overseers for all the above sums, except that received from Sykes's Charity, about which a separate arrangement was made. Some loss has been experienced from the failure of a bank in which part of the money belonging to the charity was deposited. The total annual income from all sources amounts to about £85, from which a total payment of £3 10s. 6d., under various heads, is made. The remainder is annually expended in providing cloth coats for poor men, stuff gowns for women, and a four-penny loaf for each person. The word "gowns," in the articles, might seem to confine the charity to women, but it must be remembered that it strictly means "a loose upper garment," and in the seventeenth century, especially, it was worn by men as well as women. The word "folk" too, is applicable to both sexes; and the custom having been from the earliest records of the charity to supply both men and women with coats and gowns, the intention of the original donor may be reasonably presumed to have extended to both sexes. For several years past the average number clothed has been—women 41, and men 51.

**HENRY CURZON'S CHARITY** is on a smaller scale but similar principle to Margery Wright's. It amounts to £3 yearly,

which is expended in providing gowns for poor people, and is administered by the trustees of Wright's Charity. It was founded in the year 1633.

SIMEON ASHE, in the year 1661, devised certain property in Ashby to trustees upon trust, out of the rents, to place two poor children apprentice to trades; to provide twelve penny loaves to be given away in the Church, immediately after morning service every Sunday; and to find four Bibles for distribution among four poor persons yearly. The property upon which the above charges are levied was sold by the trustees for £525 in the year 1737, subject to the annual reserved rent of £15. The property has since become very valuable, but from the peculiar wording of the devisee it has been deemed questionable whether the trustees had not the power to sell the fee simple of the property for their own benefit, subject to the rent-charge of £15. This sum is now paid by Mr. Joseph Kidger out of property in Ashby, purchased by him from the devisees of the late Mr. Robert Thornley, consisting of the Mansion House and a field at the back, called Dovecote Close. Two apprentices are annually placed out, seven or eight Bibles are given away at Christmas, and the weekly dole of bread takes place every Sunday morning. Sir Charles Abney Hastings, Bart., is the sole trustee of the charity.

ELIZABETH WILKINS gave to the Minister and Churchwardens of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, in the year 1697, the sum of £200 in the three-per-cent. Consolidated Bank Annuities, to pay the dividends of it to one of the oldest and most necessitous poor women of the parish during her life.

MARY BEAVINGTON'S CHARITY.—Mrs. Mary Beavington by her will, dated February 25th, 1848, gave £100, free from legacy duty, to the Vicar and Churchwardens of Ashby, upon trust to invest the same, and receive and apply the dividends yearly on Christmas eve in the purchase of beef for the use of

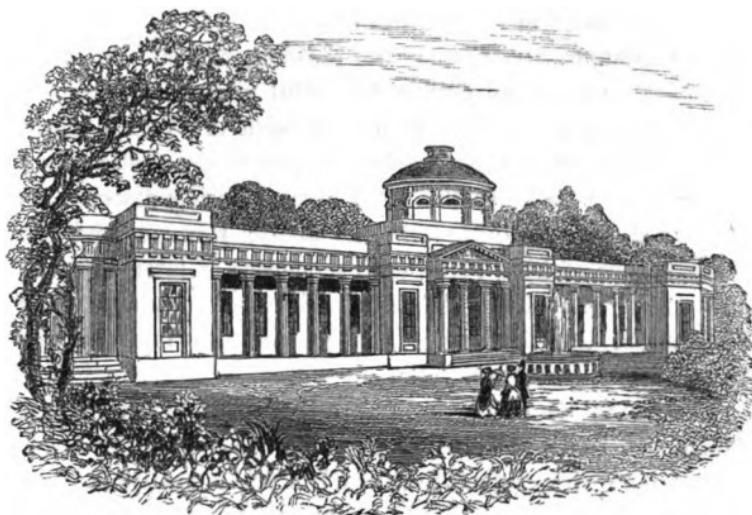
such of the most deserving poor widows resident in Ashby as they may select. Mrs. Beavington died in the month of December, 1850.

THE BREAD CHARITIES are Orme's, Sykes's, and Casey's. The first consists of a rent-charge on land at Donisthorpe for the weekly distribution of six penny wheaten loaves after morning service in the Church; the second is a rent-charge of £6 upon three closes in Ashby and Blackfordby, to be expended in like manner; and the third is the employment of the rent of land at Whitwick. The proceeds of Simeon Ashe's and these charities are thus disposed of:—Forty-nine twopenny loaves are distributed every Sunday in the Church after divine service, to the same number of poor persons residing in and belonging to the parish of Ashby, according to a list agreed upon by the Minister and Churchwardens. The same persons are allowed to receive the bread weekly during their lives, if they continue to reside in the parish and remain suitable objects. They are principally poor old widows. On the first Sunday in every month, twenty-six twopenny loaves are given to the boys belonging to the Blue-Coat School.

THE CONSOLIDATED CHARITIES.—In the year 1710 Richard Hinckley bequeathed 20*s.* yearly to the Overseers of the poor of Ashby for the use of the poor, which is duly received from the agent of the Rev. J. A. Cotton. On the table of benefactions placed in the Church, the following are recorded: William Hackett's, the interest of £5 yearly to be distributed in bread; Mrs. Mary Lynn, the interest of £20 to be distributed among poor widows; Mrs. Mary Clark, the interest of £20 to be distributed in like manner; Mrs. Muxloe, the interest of £5, and Mrs. Aspinshaw, the interest of £6, to buy shoes for orphans. The total of these sums (£56) was several years ago handed over to the Trustees of Margery Wright's Charity, and disposed of as mentioned at a previous page. The table of benefactions in the Church also records

those of John Dickenson, Mrs. Mary Piddocke, Mr. John Kidyan, and Mrs. Mary Pratt, the annual income of which amounts to £6 6s., and is partly laid out in the purchase of clothes and partly in shoes, and in money gifts of from 1s. to 2s. 6d. to a certain number of poor women.

The Rev. Arthur Hildersam's Charity, being a leasehold interest for an unexpired term of sixty years, has long since ceased. Dr. Joseph Hall's and three other small charities have been lost, no interest in respect of them having been paid for upwards of fifty years.



The Ivanhoe Baths.

## CHAPTER IX.

## THE IVANHOE BATHS, AND MINERAL WATERS.

THE Ivanhoe Baths occupy a handsome structure adjacent to the town. The building, of the Doric order, is from the design of Mr. R. Chaplin; it was completed in 1822, and is admirably adapted for affording every comfort and convenience to the visitor. The front presents a colonnade one hundred and fifty feet long, the architrave being supported by thirty-two massive fluted columns. In the centre is a broad flight of steps which conduct through a spacious portico into an elegant saloon, fifty-two feet long by twenty-seven wide, surmounted by a lofty dome adorned in pure classical taste. Each wing of the building contains six baths, with

a commodious and separate dressing room to each. There is also an excellent swimming bath, with every convenience for shower and douche applications.

The grounds surrounding the building are laid out with considerable taste and form a delightful promenade, presenting the space and foliage of a park with the varied aspect of a garden; while the venerable towers of the castle above the trees will evoke in the mind many pleasing associations connected with Ivanhoe and the gentle Rowena, and the stern barons of king John, with memories of later date—of the unfortunate Lord Hastings and his descendants, who maintained their princely household within its now dismantled and perishing walls.

The Ashby Mineral Waters have their sources in the great Moira coal basin, situated about three miles from the town. The saline springs appear in the carboniferous measures, commencing below the depth of four hundred feet. The water, which is perfectly pellucid and inodorous, exudes from the various layers of sand-rock and coal; minute drops ooze out from small cracks with a slight hissing noise, probably arising from the extraction of carbureted hydrogen gas.

The water is conducted by numerous channels into a subterraneous reservoir at a depth of a thousand feet; from this it is raised by a powerful atmospheric engine and poured into large square tanks, constructed for the purpose, and conveyed by rail in five minutes to Ashby, where it is at once transferred to an underground reservoir capable of containing two thousand baths. It is then pumped into an elevated cistern, as required, from which it flows into the baths: after use, the contents of the baths are discharged by a deep culvert which empties into the brook course at some distance.

The appearance of so remarkable a mineral water in this peculiar locality has never been satisfactorily accounted for. No perceptible diminution appears in the supply, nor any

sensible variation in the proportions of the constituents, as shewn by repeated analysis during the last thirty years.

In treating of the effects of the Ashby waters upon invalids, it is not intended to enter into a medical or scientific disquisition, but to state as briefly and clearly as may be their qualities, and to point out in what cases they may suitably be administered. Of course, in doing this we rely on the judgment and discrimination of the reader, who will at once perceive that a medical agent which might prove potent to cure in one case, would be injurious in another. This principle will be recognized at once by every candid and experienced mind, which will see also that it is not sought to prove, in this Chapter, that any means employed for the restoration of diseased persons to health can be a *panacea* for all ills; but that the Ashby waters have a specific usefulness and undisputed efficacy, beyond which it would not be proper or safe to claim for them the public suffrage.

With this preface it may be remarked, that the water has been ascertained by Dr. Ure, the eminent analytical chemist, to be composed of certain elements known as "bromides" and "chlorides," of which the latter predominate: the water, as obtained at its sources, derives nearly one-sixteenth of its weight from salts having metallic bases, combined with chlorine and bromine, which latter substance is nearly, if not quite, identical with iodine in its action on the living structure. The specific proportions of these, according to Dr. Ure's analysis, were to the imperial gallon as follows:

	GRAINS.
Bromide of Sodium .....	}
Bromide of Magnesium .....	8.0
Chloride of Calcium.....	851.2
Chloride of Magnesium .....	16.0
Chloride of Iron, or Proto-chloride.. a trace	.0
Chloride of Sodium .....	3700.5
	<hr/>
	4575.7

One thousand grains of the water, when evaporated to dryness, yield sixty-one grains and a half of gently ignited saline matter; and during the burning, the odour of bromine becomes perceptible.

In its natural state, at the springs, the water exhibits a uniformity of temperature of 62° Fahrenheit, at which it is slightly heavier than sea, rain, and river water. In the Bath Reservoir it usually cools down to 54°, six degrees cooler than the sea around this island. It tastes strongly of salt, and is slightly, but not repulsively bitter. At its natural temperature, its weight is more perceptible on the bather's person than that of fresh water.

The effect of the water varies according to its temperature, the constitution of the bather, the period of the day when immersion takes place, and the length of its continuance. Without taking the place of a precise arrangement, the classification of baths by temperature may stand as exhibited, with a view to convenience, in the subjoined table.

Cold Bath ranges between	54° F and	66°
Cool Bath.....	66° .....	74°
Tepid Bath .....	74° .....	86°
Warm Bath.....	86° .....	98°
Hot Bath .....	98° .....	116°

Under either form, hot or cold, the bath proves most beneficial to invalids and convalescents, when used about two hours after an ordinary meal. It is recommended to the general patient to use the bath heated to a degree between the cold and warm temperatures; and this may be modified while the bath is prolonged. In peculiar cases of rheumatism, the extreme hot bath may be employed with great advantage. Moreover, the bather should seek assistance to the efficacy of the bath in frequent and varied motions of the lower extremities; and, when swimming is impracticable, should employ the arms in brisk frictions over the chest, stomach and

bowels. A sure benefit is also to be obtained from a process of rubbing the person vigorously, after leaving the water, with rough well-dried towels, so as to excite a slight redness and irritation of the skin, and thus promote the development of a healthful reaction. Care should be taken to exclude cold air during the operation of dressing. Those bathers who are enfeebled by disease or constitutional imperfection, should retire to a well-aired, warm apartment, and enjoy an hour's repose in perfect quietude or sleep, guarding against the outbreak of a profuse perspiration. With others the rule will be to exercise themselves, defended from all chance of a chill, in an easy and agreeable walk, so as to sustain the vital forces in adjusting the alteration they have experienced in their activity.

These explanations and precautions being premised, it may be observed that the Ashby medicinal waters possess a remarkable energy in restoring the tone of the system; in other and fuller phraseology, they strengthen that power of self contraction which the muscles, blood vessels, and nerves possess over their fibres, and thus restore to the human system its strength and activity. The baths are also highly efficacious in removing all obstructions existing in the nervous system, and blood and other vessels, which prevent the free diffusion of the nervous energy, or the blood and other fluids. They are therefore *tonic* and *deobstruent* in their operation. For this reason they are highly beneficial, accompanied by cordial aperients, in a large class of chronic diseases, when unattended with symptomatic fever or inflammatory excitement; and also as an alterative. In the cure of full neck; scrofula and glandular swellings; diarrhoea, dysentery, and scurvy; rheumatism, gout, and rheumatic gout; dyspepsia or indigestion, nerve-ache, and green-sickness; debility with emaciation, subsequent to fevers and inflammations; obstructions in the blood vessels; chilblains and carbuncles;

and cutaneous eruptions, as scales, dandriffs, ringworms, scalls, tettters, vesicles, pustules, &c.: in all these cases, the Ashby baths have an indisputable efficacy and a beneficial influence.

The mode of applying the water is various, being suited to each complaint which it is intended to remove. At the establishment the water is applied externally, after the usual manner, by lotion, affusion, and immersion. Lotions have their proper efficacy materially affected by temperature; and this may be high, moderate, or low, in conformity with the objects sought to be obtained. In this form, and without admixture, the mineral water of Ashby-de-la-Zouch makes a useful and convenient application: and when the sick cannot safely be removed out of bed to receive an affusion or immersion, the head and neck may be treated very effectually with lotions, in most affections of the brain; and, if due frictions be added to free and frequent sponging, this produces highly favourable effects in those parts wherein vital organs, as the heart, lungs, stomach, liver, and kidneys, are inclosed. When administered as a lavement, at a suitable temperature, the Ashby mineral water is more active than the glyster, common in surgical practice; and, for the purpose of being so used, it may be impregnated with substances capable of fitting it to be powerfully beneficial in complaints, for which this sort of remedy is adapted.

Affusion or the on-pouring of water is practised here in a two-fold way—as a flow, in the stream-bath, through a tube directing it to a particular spot on the bather's person; and as rain, in the shower-bath, when its activity is thrilling and diffusive over the head and shoulders, and transmits impressions to the textures communicating with them, by connexion or sympathy.

Immersion may be partial or universal, as in the foot-bath, hip-bath, half-bath, or in that where the whole body is put

under the water; and, from each of these forms, important advantages are derived, when the employment is properly regulated. The bath proper, as it may be called, extends to complete immersion of the person; and, in being applied universally, its influences are the most energetic that the kind and condition of the water possess the power of determining. Care should be taken not to prolong the use of the bath over too long a space of time of each immersion, so that the reactionary effect may not be diminished or impeded.

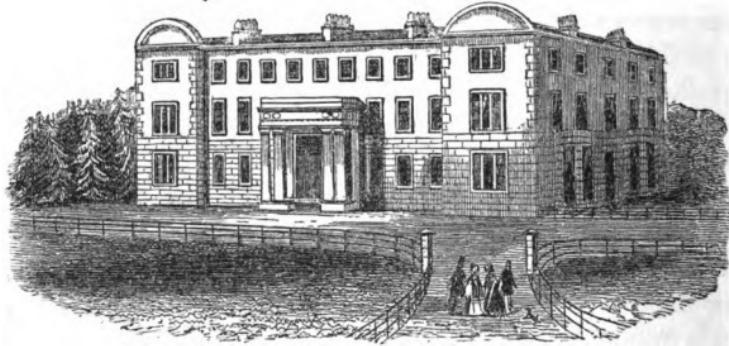
Persons disposed to apoplexy, to active disease of the heart or lungs, to enlarged liver, or any positive inflammatory action, in which a rapid or powerful impulse given to the circulation of the blood might be attended with inconvenience or injury, should not use these baths except under medical advice and direction.

The Ashby mineral water is taken inwardly as medicine, either pure as it flows from its sources, or combined with other remedial preparations; and when, as has been said, its tonic virtues are desired, it should be cold, cool, or tepid. When tepid, warm, or hot, it promotes the removal of obstructions. When taken on an empty stomach, early in the morning, at the degree of warmth most agreeable, and continued through a moderate course, one wine-glassful or less of the water will gradually restore a healthy activity to the bowels, should their slowness or irregularity, from a tendency to habitual constipation, or to frequent over-action, depend upon the weakness of these organs or of the constitution. It has been an occasional, though mistaken, practice to have recourse to the Ashby mineral water in large draughts, on the assumption of its being charged with the laxative principle, in a useful proportion. Of this principle, however, it is quite destitute, and if, at any time, it has proved aperient, its unusual operation is attributable, in all such instances, to the mere quantity of the dose and its fluidity.—When

administered in very small and very frequent doses, this water almost always intercepts the progress of a diarrhoea or recent dysentery, in a few days, when the malady has connexion with causes which depress or relax the constitution.

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Adjoining the Baths is the ROYAL HOTEL, a large and handsome structure, the fine portico of which arrests the attention of every visitor as he leaves the Railway Station. It possesses every requisite for the comfort and accommodation of the public, in its *cuisine*, its neat and commodious apartments, and its extensive stabling. Board, either in public or private, is provided on reasonable terms. The entrance hall is lofty and elegant; while from the various rooms the views of the grounds, the castle, and the surrounding scenery, are highly pleasing. Visitors of various classes may also be accommodated with board and lodging at the Baths, at the Queen's Head and other Inns, and at the houses of many of the respectable inhabitants of the town.



The Royal Hotel.



Railway Station.

## CHAPTER X.

**LEICESTER AND BURTON RAILWAY—LOCAL BOARD OF HEALTH—EXTENT, POPULATION, AND PRESENT STATE OF ASHBY—GAS COMPANY—SAVINGS BANK—THEATRE—POOR-LAW UNION—COUNTY COURT—PETTY SESSIONS—CHURCH FRIENDLY SOCIETY—LYING-IN CHARITY AND CLOTHING CLUB—BRANCH ASSOCIATIONS—ASHBY AS A PLACE OF RESIDENCE.**

THE last events of most importance connected with the history of the place, are the opening of the Leicester and Burton Railway and the introduction of Sanitary measures. The opening of the Railway took place on the 1st day of March, 1849. By the establishment of this line, Ashby became interwoven in the system of net-work with which the country has of late years been overspread. After the discontinuance of stage coaches it had been for several years

almost excluded from the main branches of international communication, but it is now linked with them directly and for ever, and participates in all the advantages, as it will soon be subject to all the influences, of the change. In five or six hours a traveller in the metropolis may be brought to Ashby, and in four or five hours an inhabitant of Liverpool may perform the distance; and it may be accomplished in a much shorter time from the towns of the Midlands.

The provisions of the "Public Health Act, 1848," have recently been made to apply to Ashby, and the Local Board is now in active operation. It is hoped that its measures will be beneficial to the best interests both of the inhabitants and the visitors to the place.

We turn now to a view of Ashby in the middle of the nineteenth century. This necessarily includes a glance at its site, extent, population, and recent improvements.

The town is in the hundred of West Goscote and deanery of Ackley, and on the western border of Leicestershire. It is the largest parish in the county, containing 11,200 computed acres; the extra parochial lordship of Alton Grange lying within its precincts. At one period it included eight separate hamlets—Blackfordby, Boothorpe, Glen, Balcroft, Swartcliffe, Woodcote, Cales or Calais, and Kilwardby; of these, two only, Blackfordby and Boothorpe, remain distinct. Calais now forms part of the north side of the town, and still retains its name.\* Kilwardby formerly stood on the site of that part of the town which now bears the name of Kilwardby-street; and is divided from the main street by the rivulet usually called the Gillwiska. Of the remaining four no traces remain, nor can it be precisely ascertained where

\* One of the Lords Hastings held land at Calais, in France, by grant from the crown. The Crown either by purchase or exchange resumed the property, and Lord Hastings made the addition then to the town of Ashby which he called "Calais."

they stood; unless it be supposed that eight old inclosures which are near the town have derived their name from the village of Woodcote.

The land in the parish is various in its quality, but generally fertile; it is singularly rich in minerals, particularly in coal, ironstone, and lead; it also furnishes limestone and valuable beds of clay. A considerable quantity of the latter is used in the neighbourhood in the manufacture of bricks, fire-bricks, and earthenware. For the conveyance of lime and coal several railways have been constructed, one of these passes through a tunnel four hundred and fifty yards long, which is cut through a hill about a mile distant from Ashby, whence the road then proceeds to the Ashby Station. It was previously carried forward until it terminated at the Willesley Basin on the Ashby Canal.

The population of Ashby-de-la-Zouch has shown a regular and considerable increase in the half century just concluded. In 1801 the township contained only 2,674 inhabitants; in 1821 the number had increased to 3,937; in 1831 to 4,400; in 1841 to 5,208; and in 1851 to 5,691. The population has therefore more than doubled itself in fifty years.

Ashby is not a manufacturing town, though a portion of its population is engaged in manufacturing pursuits—their productions being principally hosiery and earthenware. It has not, however, the aspect of a place of business, so much as that of a genteel and respectable town. The frontispiece to this work, representing its main street, wide and well built, will give the stranger a fair idea of the external appearance of its chief thoroughfare; from which branch several other streets. Within the last few years the principal street has been greatly improved and modernized by the removal of an ancient Market Cross (which stood nearly in the centre), by the rebuilding of many of the houses, and by repaving and flagging the causeways. The principal streets are Market-

street, Kilwardby-street, Bath-street, Wood-street, Upper and Lower Church-streets, and Ivanhoe-road. The more recent erections are the Royal Hotel, Rawdon Terrace, Ivanhoe Terrace, Prior Park Houses, Shrubbery Terrace, and Highfield House. The less eligible parts, called the Green and the Calais, are distinct and occupy the north side of the town.

The civil government of Ashby is in the hands of a Constable and two Headboroughs, who are annually chosen at a Court Leet held by the Lord of the Manor. The market is held on Saturday, and its annual fairs on Shrove-Monday, Easter-Tuesday, Whit-Tuesday, first Tuesday after September 21st (which is also a statute for hiring servants), and November 10th. It is also one of the polling places for the Northern Division of the county.

In 1833 the town was first lighted with Gas, a company having been formed in that year with a capital of £2,000, in shares of £25 each; and in 1847, in consequence of enlarged operations, an additional £5 per share was called up. The company has uniformly paid a dividend of £5 per cent. per annum.

THE SAVINGS BANK, in Mill Lane, was established in 1818. On the 20th November, 1850, the deposits amounted to £31,779 10s. 4d.; belonging to 974 individuals, and 31 Charitable and eight Friendly Societies. The Bank is open every Saturday from 11 to 12 o'clock.

THE THEATRE.—This was built in 1828, in Bath-street, by Mr. Bennett, the Manager of the Worcester Company. It is neatly fitted up with boxes, pit, and gallery; and will hold about £50.

THE POOR-LAW UNION.—The building is situate about half-a-mile out of the town on the Nottingham Road. It was originally an incorporated House of Industry, comprising about eight or ten parishes, but on the introduction of the new Poor-Law, in 1836, was greatly enlarged; and

in 1843 a Fever House was added. Nine acres of land are attached to the buildings, and some of the inmates are employed in grinding corn at a hand-mill. The house will hold three hundred persons. The district, which occupies an area of eighty-three square miles, had a population of 24,239 persons in 1841, residing in 4,898 houses; and comprises the following parishes or townships, to which is added the population in 1851, viz:

	POPULATION.		POPULATION.
Ashby-de-la-Zouch . . . . .	5,691	Osgathorpe . . . . .	346
Appleby . . . . .	1,181	Ravenstone . . . . .	396
Blackfordby . . . . .	573	Seals, Over and Nether	1,085
Calke . . . . .	79	Smisby . . . . .	423
Coleorton . . . . .	549	Snarestone . . . . .	387
Donisthorpe . . . . .	392	Staunton Harold . . . . .	326
Hartshorne . . . . .	1,318	Stretton-en-le-Field ..	105
Heather . . . . .	384	Swanington . . . . .	822
Hugglescote, with Don- ington . . . . .	1,014	Sweppstone . . . . .	585
Measham . . . . .	1,608	Thringstone . . . . .	1,298
Normanton-en-le-Heath	170	Ticknall . . . . .	1,241
Oakthorpe . . . . .	591	Whitwick . . . . .	2,836
Packington, with Snib- ston . . . . .	1,294	Willesley . . . . .	48
		Worthington . . . . .	1,203

Making a total population of 25,896 persons, residing in 5,401 houses. The annual expenditure for the relief of the poor in the year ending December, 1850, was £4,217 10s. 0d.

A COUNTY COURT is held in Ashby for the recovery of small debts; now extended to £50. It includes the same district as the Poor-Law Union. John Hildyard, Esq., is the Judge, and Mr. Dewes the Clerk. The Court is held monthly in a large room at the Royal Hotel, designated the "Public Office."

Ashby is now the centre of a PETTY SESSIONAL DIVISION of the County, called the "Ashby-de-la-Zouch Division." It

comprises the following parishes:—Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Appleby, Bardon, Blackfordby, Boothorpe, Breedon-on-the-Hill, Coleorton, Donisthorpe, Gracedieu, Heather, Hugglescote, Netherseal, Newton Burgoland, Osgathorpe, Overseal, Packington, Snarestone, Staunton Harold, Swanington, Swopestone, Thringstone, Tonge, Whitwick, Wilson, and Worthington. Until this beneficial arrangement was made great inconvenience was experienced by parties being taken to Loughborough for all Special Session business. Petty Sessions are held fortnightly at the Public Office, Royal Hotel.

THE ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH CHURCH OF ENGLAND FRIENDLY SOCIETY was established in 1844; and, in addition to the contributions of its ordinary members, is supported by a numerous list of honorary members also. For small monthly contributions, the members are provided with pecuniary relief and medical assistance during sickness, and with annuities varying from 1*s.* to 8*s.* per week for life after the age of 65. The first and seventh Annual Reports of this Society showed the following results:

	May, 1845.	May, 1851.
Honorary Members.....	38 .....	43
Ordinary Members .....	26 .....	89
Amount of Funds.. £33 2 <i>s.</i> 11½ <i>d.</i> ..	£263 1 <i>s.</i> 7½ <i>d.</i>	
Payments to Sick.. 2 18 0 ..	17 1 0.	

Ashby has also its LYING-IN CHARITY and CLOTHING CLUB. Since their establishment in 1836 the number of women who have annually received the benefit of the Lying-in Charity has been upwards of fifty; and the number of members in the Clothing Club has averaged 283, during the same period.

In the Churches, sermons are now annually preached and collections made in aid of—the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge—the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts—the Church Missionary Society—the Society for Promoting Christianity amongst the Jews—the Additional

Curates' Aid Society—and the Society for the Building of Churches and Chapels in Populous Places. The Bible Society has also its branch Association in Ashby, supported both by churchmen and dissenters.

Whether to persons possessing fixed incomes, or to valetudinarians, Ashby offers inviting advantages as a place of permanent or temporary residence. To the former its educational establishments, and the moderate charges for articles of food, offer advantages which few places can equal; to these may be added, the lightness of the local charges, the poor-rate being (according to a late parliamentary return) only about threepence-halfpenny in the pound per quarter, and other rates similarly low. The valetudinarian will find the baths highly efficacious, and the adjoining grounds a delightful place of exercise; while the neighbouring country abounds in sites of scenic or historic interest, to which agreeable drives may be made for several days in succession.

Since the former part of this work was printed, Paulyn Reginald Serlo, third Marquis of Hastings, mentioned at page 59 as the present owner of the family title and estates, died in Dublin on the 17th of January, 1851, aged 19. He is succeeded by his brother, Henry Plantagenet, born in 1842. The untimely fate of the young and amiable Marquis is recorded on a neat Tablet placed in the family chapel of the Parish Church.

Beside this memento stands a handsome marble Cenotaph, commemorative of his noble sire, erected at a cost of more than £300, raised by subscription from numerous friends in and about Ashby. The monument is a gratifying tribute to his worth, and bears an inscription laudatory of his many estimable qualities.

## ASHBY-DE-LA-ZOUCH.

A TALE OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY.\*

*From "Poems," by the late Lady Flora Hastings. Blackwood, 1841.*

The author  
addresseth  
the courteous  
public.

YE gentles gay  
List to my lay,  
On lofty themes I touch—  
A song I'll sing  
Of James the King,  
And Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Royal musings.

The monarch sate  
In regal state,  
As chronicles will vouch;  
Absorb'd—for nought  
Could claim a thought  
But Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

\* “ It is well known that it was part of the policy of King James I. to visit any of his subjects whose power and riches rendered them formidable, and, by his long residence at their expense, to diminish their fortunes. Amongst the rest, his majesty, attended by a numerous suite, visited Henry the fifth Earl of Huntingdon, and was splendidly entertained. I do not suppose the tradition to be strictly correct, which is still assigning three weeks or two months as the duration of the royal visit; but his arrival is thus mentioned in a MS. history of the Hastings' family:—‘ 1st September 1617. King James being on his return from Scotland, towards which he went on 15th March preceding, was entertained, together with the whole court, by this Earle at his house in Ashby-de-la-Zouch; the king lodging there all night.’ ”

“ This little poem was written in consequence of a friend doubting the possibility of any great number of rhymes being to be found for ‘ Ashby-de-la-Zouch’; and Lady Flora took the old tradition of King James's visit, as the groundwork of the attempt to which she was laughingly challenged.”—*Note by Lady Flora's sister, the Marchioness of Bute.*

**Anticipatory  
reflections.**

Nor yet renown  
Had made it known  
For baths, hot, cold, and douche;  
Nor Scott to fame  
Consign'd the name  
Of Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**Rumour telleth of  
the magnificence  
of Earl Henry.**

But fame declared  
Earl Henry fared  
As kings to fare would grudge—  
His banquet-hall  
Was free to all,  
In Ashby-de-la-Zouch :

**Of the illustrious  
guests.**

To every squire  
In Leicestershire—  
And there were many such—  
And chivalry  
Of high degree,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**The resolve.**

Outspake the King—  
“A settled thing!  
I'll taste no more hotch-potch,  
Till I shall know  
How matters go  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**The plan  
unfolded.**

“I'll down and share  
My cousin's fare;  
I'll mount the heavy coach,  
And it shall drop  
Me from its top,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**Objections  
answered.**

“ ‘Tis not the thing  
To suit a king,  
My ministers avouch ;  
But I will jog  
Along—*incog.*—  
To Ashby-de-la-Zouch.”

**Effect produced.**

On all men near  
Fell doubt and fear—  
He might have spoken Dutch :  
They puzzled long,  
That courtier throng,  
O'er Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**The constitution-  
al advisers of the  
crown alarmed.**

Could it be meant  
As precedent  
For future kings to clutch ?  
Use his own eyes  
Instead of spies,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch ?

**The author  
moralizeth.**

Oh ! dream too free  
For majesty !  
Could truth to thrones approach,  
James had gone down  
From town alone  
To Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**A threatened  
resignation.**

The premier knelt ;  
He said—he felt  
He must from office trudge,  
Should etiquette  
The king forget,  
For Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Of the pride,  
positive and  
possible, of the  
Plantagenets.

That haughty set,  
Plantagenet,  
Had never learn'd to crouch ;  
Too proud they'd be  
The king to see  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

Limitations of  
the royal pre-  
rogative.

If he *would* go,  
He hoped he'd do  
As council best might judge ;  
Some means they'd find  
My lord to grind,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

A charitable  
suggestion.

To entertain  
A goodly train  
Might lighten my lord's pouch ;  
Some weeks to spend  
He'd recommend  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

La nuit porte  
conseil.

Ere morning's light  
Had banish'd night,  
The monarch left his couch ;  
And straightway sent  
To this intent,  
To Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

A gracious  
letter.

" He did not fear  
He on his dear  
Kind kinsman could encroach ;  
He'd be, he knew,  
Le Bien-venu  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch."

A humble reply,  
and animadver-  
sions thereon.

The Earl profess'd  
Himself most bless'd ;  
(The premier mutter'd "Fudge !")  
And all the court  
Did straight resort  
To Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

**Preparation.**

But wo the while !  
What haste, what toil,  
To build, and eke to botch ;  
To brew, to bake—  
To mend, to make—  
In Ashby-de-la-Zouch !

**Perplexities.**

Earl Henry stood  
In thoughtful mood—  
The Countess tore her mutch ;  
She thought of all  
That might befall  
Poor Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

More definite  
apprehensions.

Her buttery, stored  
With many a hoard,  
Where erst none dared to poach,  
Would rifled be,  
She could foresee,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The Countess  
anticipateth an  
incursion of the  
Picts and Scots.

"He will bring down,"  
She cried, "from town,  
Hosts of his starving Scotch ;  
They'll find no kail,  
Nor parritch meal,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch!"

The King  
arriveth.

On foot, on horse,  
All rush'd of course,  
With sword, bow, staff, or crutch,  
The king to meet,  
And gladly greet,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The King fares  
sumptuously.

Great was the guest,  
As great the feast,  
And none could thrift reproach ;  
Of buck and roe  
They had enow,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

A word in favour  
of the Trent.

Gillwiska's stream\*  
Could not, I deem,  
Afford pike, perch, or roach ;  
But generous Trent  
A tribute sent  
To Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

The Malmsey  
butt is broached.

He gave the word,  
That princely lord,  
The Malvoisie to broach ;  
The fatal wine†  
Was thought "divine"  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

"De omnibus  
rebus—et multis  
aliis."

I might as well  
Attempt to tell  
The feats of Scaramouch,  
As all the "sport  
Of that gay court"  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

\* A stream that runs close to Ashby.

† Fatal to George, Duke of Clarence, Lord Huntingdon's ancestor.

The finale,  
wherein lurketh  
a moral.

The bells did ring,  
The gracious king  
Enjoy'd his visit much ;  
And we've been poor-  
Er since that hour,  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch.

## ONE OF THE HASTINGS'.

## POSTSCRIPT.

Among these rhymes  
I've many times  
Rejected the word "slouch;"  
I do not know  
What it could do  
At Ashby-de-la-Zouch !

## EXCURSIONS.

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THE vicinity of Ashby possesses many objects of interest, and abounds with beautiful and diversified scenery. The Antiquary, the Geologist, the Botanist, the votary of Agricultural development, and the inquirer into the hidden treasures of the mine, will all find ample food for their respective tastes; while the lover of the picturesque cannot fail but be charmed, as he climbs the bold and primitive rocks of Charnwood, or strays over the undulating slopes which distinguish the rich pastoral districts, or contemplates amid the shady recesses of Trent's fair valley.

In the following pages, the principal points of interest are briefly noticed, and classed under several drives or rides, each of which will occupy but a few hours, and will be found fully to repay the stranger for the time and labour he may bestow.

## EXCURSION I.

## TO DONINGTON PARK.

LEAVING the town by the Nottingham Road, in about half a mile we pass on the right an irregular brick building, which is the Union Workhouse; the structure is quite handsome enough for the purpose, and is happily found more than large enough to accommodate the misery compelled to seek its shelter.

In about a mile and a half further, we pass over the ridge of the Old Park, the high grounds of which protect Ashby from the north and east winds. This tract constituted part of the demesne or chase formerly attached to the Castle; and in those famous olden times when might was too often right, and when the golden moments of the oppressor brought iron hours to the oppressed, these fair acres afforded an occasional recreation to the lordly possessor, who, in some wild sport or sylvan pastime, carried out the rigour of his forest laws; while in our own days, the rich pasture, the luxuriant copse, and the teeming corn field have occupied the landscape,—and the Old Park of Ashby Castle now furnishes employment to some hundred industrious peasants, the produce of whose labour enriches the common store-house, and who, if not now protected by the shadow of the feudal shield, are at all events free from the ruthless goad of the feudal lance.

Descending the brow of the hill, we pass Lount; where are some coal mines, in which portions of the Cannel coal, of considerable purity, are found, and where pot-works are also

carried on. On the left is Staunton Harold, the seat of Earl Ferrers, to be described in another Excursion. After traversing an agricultural flat for about three miles, we reach Breedon village; situated at the foot of a singular hill of lime-stone, protruding through the circumjacent plain of sand and marl, and having no apparent connection with any similar formation. The peculiar character of the fossils found in the strata show the mass to belong to the mountain lime-stone group; though the structure has been greatly changed, and its insular position in so distant a locality is difficult to explain. The hill rises to a height of about 150 feet, and the strata are thrown nearly vertical. One side presents a precipitous face, from which the stone has been quarried; it is burned into lime, and much esteemed for building purposes, but as it contains twenty or thirty per cent. of magnesia, its use in agriculture is not general. The kilns are placed at the base of the rock, and almost constantly envelope the village in a dense cloud of smoke, but no injurious consequences appear to result from its inhalation.

On the summit of the hill, which is steep and difficult of access, stands the Church formerly attached to the Priory. To account for the strange position of the sacred edifice, legendary tradition has had recourse to the agency of certain evil spirits, who, either not liking that the pious inhabitants of Breedon should have any place of worship, or objecting on conscientious grounds to it being of the established form, did each night most feloniously carry away every stick and stone prepared for building a church on the low level ground. In vain were the foundations laid with exorcising spells, and the ashlar embedded in a charmed mortar: all had disappeared in the morning, and the goblins decidedly had the best of it. It was at last resolved to carry all the materials to the top of the hill, and there to erect the church, which was accomplished without further interruption.

Leaving Breedon, and pursuing our way, we shortly reach the hamlet of Isley Walton. This parish, comprising about six hundred acres, is the property of a Company in London, called the Bowyers' Company; which was originally chartered for the purpose of supplying some hundred stout bows to the King's Archers, in consideration for which certain lands and privileges were granted. The duties of the Corporation have of course long since become a sinecure, and the revenues are now appropriated to the more peaceful objects of Livery dinners and Wardens' quarterly audits.

One mile from Isley Walton we arrive at Donington Park, the seat of the Marquis of Hastings. The demesne is entered through a neat gateway, flanked by an ornamented stone lodge. The road traverses a shady avenue skirted by luxuriant plantations, and a massive gate admits us to the park. This delightful spot presents many of the most beautiful features of landscape scenery, in its varied aspects. The park contains not more than three hundred acres, but it is so diversified with hill and valley that it appears to be of much greater extent. There are two fine terrace drives; the one on the north commands a view over the lofty towers and spires of Derby, and the bold outlines of the High Peak district, with its pinnacle-shaped mountain masses. From the eastern terrace a prospect is obtained of the dismantled Castle of Nottingham, backed by the high grounds of Sherwood Forest; while the many windings of the Trent as it meanders through the broad meadows, until lost amid the flowery groves of Clifton, may be traced as in a map. The turf of the park is remarkably soft and verdant, and the whole demesne is well wooded; a number of fine old oak trees form not the least interesting feature of the landscape. One of these venerable patriarchs of the forest, which was blown down some time since, exhibited on a careful examination with the microscope upwards of eight hundred concentric rings, showing

that so many years had passed since first the young sapling commenced its process of development. Many of the butts are probably much older; some are quite hollow and retain but the shell of their former greatness. Many of the old ivy-wreathed boles are rugged and broken: the lightning may have scathed them, or the storm may have riven their gnarled branches, yet there they stand, majestic even in their desolation; while with each returning Spring they bud forth in bright foliage, or, as the succeeding Autumn sheds around its softened tints, shower down their rich brown acorns; just as they did in the days when the Saxon and the Norman strove for the mastery of merry England. Art is ever changeable in its phasis—nature alone delights in unvarying cycles.

The house is situated in a charmingly sheltered nook at the meeting of three valleys. The building is a square edifice, surrounding a small interior court. Over the front portico is a lantern tower of great beauty and elegance. A small chapel, chastely and appropriately fitted up, forms the east wing of the structure. The library is a noble room, seventy feet long; and contains about 15,000 volumes, comprising many rare and valuable works. In the entrance hall there is some curious armour, together with several fine specimens of antlers; and the walls of the breakfast and drawing rooms are adorned with some valuable paintings. The mansion was re-built in 1795, by the first Marquis of Hastings; a man who is recorded in the page of history both as a warrior and a statesman. "Lord Moira," by which name he is best known, possessed that rare union of powers and talents which fitted him alike for the camp and the cabinet. He had all the energy, perseverance, and coolness requisite for planning and executing an intricate campaign; at the same time his high intellectual endowments, his sound common sense, his knowledge of human nature, and his great diplomatic skill, rendered him a most efficient adviser in the council. In his

private life as connected with Donington, Lord Moira is still remembered gratefully by those who admired his many acts of munificence. His was one of those peculiarly constituted minds that can never bear to see want or sorrow existing, if it be in the power of money to relieve them; and while he was ever ready to make any personal sacrifice, he perhaps sometimes may have forgotten the good old maxim of being "just before being generous." Donington was the home of the whole family of Bourbons, during their exile from France in the early part of the Revolution. There is in the library a fine full-length portrait of Charles X., as Monsieur, and another of his son, the Duke d'Angoulême, afterwards "Dauphin."

The northern boundary of the park is skirted by the river Trent, which here forms a charming reach more than a mile long and of considerable breadth. The stream flows at the foot of a steep cliff, clothed to the river's edge with varied foliage.

A quarter of a mile down the river, where it makes an angle, stand King's Mills, where the coarser kinds of paper are manufactured on the recently improved plan. There is also a mill for grinding flints, and an ingenious apparatus for cutting the dye-woods. On the wear which dams up the water for the wheels there are several traps or leaps for the taking of salmon. These traps consist of two parallel walls, about three feet apart, built up from the slope of the wear to some distance above the surface of the water, forming, as it were, a long narrow alley; at the lower end of which there are two open barred gates turning inwards. These are fixed in the position of a V, having an opening of four or five inches at the apex. The upper end of the alley is furnished with a sluice, which on being raised permits the water to rush through the trap with great force. Salmon, it is well known, come up the various rivers for the purpose of deposit-

ing their spawn, and they seem to prefer the quiet part of streams most remote from the sea. This wear is the first obstacle of importance met with on the Trent, and if the flow of water over the fall is not sufficient to enable the fish to make his way across the barrier he has to face the strong current pouring through the trap, and having forced himself beyond the narrow opening in the V, becomes trammeled in the angle formed by the wall with the gates, or hecks, as they are called, and is taken out with a small net or boat hook. The salmon caught here are sometimes thirty pounds weight, and are highly prized in the London market.

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## EXCURSION II.

### TO COLEORTON, GRACEDIEU, AND THE MONASTERY OF ST. BERNARD.

THE way to Coleorton is the same as in the first Excursion, namely, the Nottingham road, till the toll-gate is reached, when the road bears to the right, and we shortly arrive at the entrance to the demesne of Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart.; a spot justly admired, as comprising some of the choicest beauties both of nature and art. In speaking of the gardens attached to this mansion, an elegant writer observes:—"To him who is a lover of nature, who identifies with her haunts many hours of happiness; for whom the deep stillness of midnight has a voice, and the unfathomable stars a spell; who finds melody in the ripple of the running stream, as it gushes away with soft and silvery murmur through its time-worn channel, and music when the breeze

of night sweeps through the wood and summons from its innumerable boughs the wildest harmony ; Coleorton is fairy ground."

In front of the house a delightful lawn spreads out its velvet carpet, and conducts us to the terrace ; from which is obtained an extensive prospect of the distant hills and forest rocks, and a nearer panorama of luxuriant meadows and thickly-wooded uplands. Immediately below the terrace is the Flower Garden, designed by the late Lady Beaumont. It is a level plot of grass, diversified with more than a hundred beds of different forms, containing the choicest gems from Flora's store-house. Leaving this lovely parterre, we pass into the Winter Garden, formed on the site of a considerable stone quarry. In this sheltered spot all the varied evergreens of our own chilly clime, together with many rare exotics from more genial soils, flourish in unusual splendour ; and amid the snows and desolation of December, present an aspect of perennial green.

Coleorton was the favorite haunt of the poet Wordsworth ; and his flowing numbers were frequently called forth to memorialize its beauties. On a gentle knoll, commanding a charming sylvan view, stands a cedar, an acacia, and a rose tree, while near them is placed a rustic seat ;—a tablet, with the following inscription from the pen of Wordsworth, tells the tale :

"The embowering rose, the acacia, and the pine,  
Will not unwillingly their place resign ;  
If but the cedar thrive that near them stands,  
Planted by Beaumont's and by Wordsworth's hands.  
One woed the silent art with studious pains ;  
These groves have heard the other's pensive strains.  
May nature's kindliest powers sustain the tree,  
And love protect it from all injury !  
And when its potent branches, wide out-thrown,  
Darken the brow of this memorial stone ;  
Here may some painter sit in future days,  
Some future poet meditate his lays ;

Not mindless of that distant age renown'd  
 When inspiration hovered o'er the ground,  
 The haunt of him who sang how spear and shield  
 In civil conflict met on Bosworth Field;  
 And of that famous youth, full soon removed  
 From earth, perhaps by Shakespear's self approved,  
 Fletcher's associate, Johnson's friend beloved!"

In another part of the grounds is a Cenotaph to Sir Joshua Reynolds, approached by an avenue of lime trees in imitation of a Gothic aisle in Westminster Abbey. Terminating the vista is a tablet bearing this inscription :

" Ye lime trees ranged before this hallowed urn,  
 Shoot forth with lively power at Spring's return,  
 And be not slow a stately growth to rear  
 Of pillars branching off from year to year.  
 Till ye at length have formed a darksome aisle,  
 Like a recess within that hallowed pile  
 Where Reynolds, 'mid our country's noblest dead,  
 In the last sanctity of fame is laid.  
 And worthily within those sacred bounds  
 Th' excelling painter sleeps; yet here may I  
 Unblamed upon my patrimonial grounds  
 Raise this frail tribute to his memory.  
 An humble follower of the soothing art  
 That he professed; attached to him in heart,  
 Admiring, loving, and with grief and pride,  
 Feeling what England lost when Reynolds died."

Opposite the library windows is a Monument to the memory of the dramatic poet, Francis Beaumont. Here again the muse of Wordsworth is called forth in the following lines :

" Beneath yon eastern ridge, the craggy bound,  
 Rugged and high, of Charnwood's forest ground;  
 Stand yet, but, Stranger! hidden from thy view,  
 The ivied Ruins of forlorn Grace-Dieu;  
 Erst a religious House, which day and night  
 With hymns resounded and the chanted rite:  
 And when those rites had ceased the spot gave birth  
 To honourable men of varied worth;  
 There, on the margin of a streamlet wild,  
 Did Francis Beaumont sport an eager child;  
 There, under shadow of the neighbouring rocks,  
 Sung youthful tales of shepherds and their flocks;

Unconscious prelude to heroic themes,  
 Heart-breaking tears, and melancholy dreams  
 Of slighted love, and scorn, and jealous rage,  
 With which his genius shook the buskin'd stage;  
 Communities are lost and Empires die,  
 And things of holy use unhallowed lie;  
 They perish—but the Intellect may raise,  
 From airy words alone, a pile that ne'er decays."

The House contains some choice paintings; amongst them a celebrated one by Paulo Panini, representing the interior of the Colonna Gallery, as filled with the master works of art previously to its spoliation by French selfishness; the pictures are all fac-similes, and the work is a complete study for an artist. In the hall is an exquisite marble group figuring "Psyche borne by the Zephyrs," from the chisel of Gibson. Sir George Beaumont, when in Rome, visited the studio of the young sculptor and then discerned through his obscurity the shinings of a great genius. He at once gave him a commission to execute the design of the group; and at the same time, with true munificence, placed in his hands £500. The artist did not disappoint the anticipations of his patron: the work is a *chef d'œuvre*.

The gardens, pineries, graperies, conservatories, &c., attached to the house are most complete; and under the skilful management of the head gardener, furnish many a prize at the horticultural fêtes of Chiswick and the Regent's Park. The grounds are open every day, until five o'clock, but the house is not shown.

After taking a peep at the pretty little Church standing in the demesne, we pass on to the village of Coleorton, which extends for more than a mile. The cottages dotted about in all directions over the broken and undulating ground, and the quiet Rectory embosomed in soft foliage, present a very picturesque appearance.

On the right is a tract well known as Coleorton Moor, whence the Midland districts were for a long time supplied

with coal. It was formerly an open and barren wold; it is now enclosed and cultivated, and the estate throughout is tastefully interspersed with plantations.

Passing St. George's Church on Swanington Common, and Pegg's Green Colliery to the left, in about two miles (leaving Thringstone on the right) we arrive at Gracedieu; where are the remains of one of those religious houses, which, in the dark ages of rapine and bloodshed and feudal tyranny, formed a shelter from the storms of the world for such religious devotees as preferred a life of secluded piety to one of active struggle. The Priory of Gracedieu was founded in 1240, by Roesia de Verdun, for a prioress and fourteen nuns. From the report of a commission appointed in 1534, to visit this and similar establishments, it was stated that the nuns had been guilty of certain irregularities. The convent was shortly after dissolved; and on the very day after the property was surrendered it was conveyed to Mr. John Beaumont, one of the commissioners; whose love of broad lands, it was believed, had mainly influenced the decision against the morality of the sisterhood.

The Ruins stand in a sequestered little valley near the road; they have been greatly mutilated and defaced, and but a few broken walls remain to tell where stood the once stately structure. Burton says that the garden was made to imitate that of Gethsemene on Mount Olivet, and the outer walls enclose many acres. The antiquary may yet delight to trace amid the crumbling fragments outlines of the hallowed ground, and to conjecture the purposes of the various parts. The moralist will but discern the mutability of all human designs; and the railway contractor will only see good foundations for a viaduct.

The dramatic poet, Francis Beaumont, Fletcher's companion, was born at Gracedieu, in 1586; and his genius sheds a bright and enduring halo around the locality. A

handsome mansion, now the residence of A. L. Phillipps, Esq., has been built near the precincts of the Priory, adding much to the agreeable effect of the landscape.

A mile beyond Gracedieu we leave the highway to Loughborough, and, taking the right hand road, enter at once on the district of Charnwood Forest. This tract, which is about ten miles in length by six in breadth, presents many points of bold and almost sublime scenery. The active pedestrian, who may delight to ramble over its lofty hills and rugged ravines, will find health in the invigorating breeze and excitement in the contemplation of nature in her ruder forms. The term "forest" conveys a very imperfect notion of this rocky wilderness. Previously to the inclosure, which was commenced in 1808, there was scarcely a tree for miles to relieve the monotonous waste. It was not, however, always thus. Both record and tradition have clothed the heights with many a sylvan shade and tangled brake, while the forest monarch spread wide his massive branches over numerous hills and dales; but this was far, far back, in the calendar of time, long before the Norman invasion.

An old legend says, that a man might have walked from Beaumanor to Bardon at noon-day without seeing the sun, and that the squirrel could be followed in Charnwood from tree to tree for six miles. The forest was always plentifully stocked with game, and was ever a favourite resort of the hunter; indeed it may be well believed that bold Robin Hood, with his merry men, might sometimes have quitted the leafy bowers of bonny Sherwood to taste the king's venison in the forest of Charnwood. Before the days of Edgar, this chase was greatly infested with wolves; the wild boar too was often started from his lair in the thicket, and the eagle from her eyry in the cliffs.

In a sequestered valley, surrounded by some of the wildest features of forest landscape, stands the Monastery of

St. Bernard. In the year 1835 a barren tract of more than two hundred acres was purchased by some Roman Catholic priests, who erected a small monastery, and commenced cultivating the desert around. Five years after, through the bounty of the Earl of Shrewsbury, and by the aid of various contributions levied on good Romanists throughout the kingdom, the brethren were enabled to build a much more spacious structure, from the design of A. W. Pugin, Esq., which is now completed, and forms one of the most interesting objects of the neighbourhood. The dormitories, the refectory, and offices, are in pure monastic taste; and the Church is richly and appropriately ornamented. The monks are of the Cistercian order; a community long celebrated for its profession of sanctity, for the rigidness of its fasts, and the austerity of its penances. This establishment is stated to be affiliated to the Abbey of Melleraye, in Brittany; but probably it was a transplanting of the parent stock itself, as that monastery is said to have been suppressed about the time when the fraternity made their appearance in Charnwood.

The visitor may return through Whitwick, where there is a fine old Church, founded in the eleventh century, and some slight remains of a Castle.

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### EXCURSION III.

#### TO BARDON HILL AND BRADGATE PARK.

QUITTING the town by the Leicester Road we shortly pass under the Railway, and in about four miles reach the village of Ravenstone. On the left stands the residence of Leonard Fosbrooke, Esq., and on the right that of R. G. Creswell, Esq.

Here is an excellent charitable institution, called Ravenstone Hospital, for thirty-two aged women. It was founded in 1712, by John Wilkins, Esq., and his wife. The present income is upwards of £900 a-year; and the inmates, who must be above fifty years of age and members of the Church of England, are provided with every comfort.

One mile to the left is Coalville, where are the extensive collieries of Whitwick and Snibston, from which Leicester derives the chief part of its fuel. Until the commencement of these collieries, about twenty-four years since, this place was familiarly known as "Long Lane,"\* and contained three or four houses only. It has now a busy population of upwards of 1500, lying within the townships of Whitwick, Hugglescote, Snibston, and Swanington.

Having passed the small hamlet of Donington, and the village of Hugglescote, we again cross the rail at the Bardon Station, and ascending gradually for some distance, reach Shaw-Lane, nine miles from Ashby. Here the visitor will find good accommodation for horse and carriage which he will do well to leave. So far, nothing very interesting has presented itself, but now we quit the road, and taking our way through some fields on the left, pass near Bardon-Hall, the residence of R. J. Hood, Esq.; it is a semi-Elizabethan structure, finely situated, and built in good taste. The ascent to the hill is by a circuitous footpath, winding through thickly growing plantations. On the summit is a small building, called the summer-house; from the top of this a most magnificent prospect bursts on the sight. For extent of surface and diversity of aspect perhaps this view is not surpassed by any other in Great Britain. The height of Bardon Hill is about nine hundred feet, and though this is insignificant in comparison with the lofty peaks of Cambria and the Lake land, still our

\* This Lane is a portion of the old Roman road leading from Leicester to Burton.

Leicestershire beacon possesses peculiar advantages, rising as it does in an insular cone which out-tops the surrounding knolls. To the east, Belvoir Castle and Lincoln Cathedral may be seen; in the north, the whole of the Peak district of Derbyshire is apparent; while in the west, with a good glass, the Malvern Hills of Worcestershire, the Wrekin, and Clay Hills of Shropshire, and even the distant mountains of North Wales may be discerned. The panorama includes an area of more than five thousand square miles, being about one-twelfth part of the kingdom, excluding Scotland.

Bardon was an important station in the late trigonometrical survey of England, made by an order of the Board of Ordnance, and a huge pile of stones still remains as a landmark for future operations. It is stated that more than five hundred churches can be seen from this spot. Of course a fine clear day must be selected for the visit, as the summit is frequently obscured by mists. And it is not improbable this natural phenomenon may have given to the hill its name; as, in the ancient dialect of the original inhabitants (whose language yet remains in the signatures of our mountains, our streams, and the promontories of the coast,) *Bar* and *Dun* signify a dusky or dark-coloured summit. Here, therefore, we may imagine the Celtic bards, with the richly swelling harmony of many harps, hymned the praises of the bright day-god, or invoked with fearful spells the darker spirits of the mountain and the storm. The flanks of the hill are well clothed with woods, which oft-times resound to the call of the hunter's horn, while a sly reynard starts from his secret cover, and the shrill cries of the dogs awaken the echoes of many a rocky steep and leafy dell. Bardon is open to the public twice a week: the days may be ascertained by reference to the Leicester papers.

Returning to the high road, and again taking horse, we proceed down the southern side of the forest range: after

about a mile, a lane to the left conducts us, by a somewhat rugged descent of two miles, into the village of Newtown Linford. Here the carriage should remain, as the beauties of Bradgate are best seen in a walk. The park is situated on the south-eastern edge of Charnwood Forest, and combines the bold wild scenery of rock and heath, characterizing that barren tract, with the more pastoral features of streamlet and bower, and verdant lawn and flowery mead, which distinguish a richly cultivated district. The demesne is surrounded by a wall seven miles in extent, and is intersected by several smaller fences. The surface is greatly diversified, the soft mossy turf of the glades and slopes contrasting with the harsh herbage and fern of the more rugged parts; while the ancient trunks of the gnarled oaks, with the graceful deer, some of the real old forest breed, winding among them, add much to the picturesque quaintness of the landscape. On one of the highest parts of the park stands a tower, called Old John; this should be the first point visited, as it commands a charming prospect over the Groby woods and circumjacent country.

The Ruins, which are well situated, are considerable and chiefly composed of brick. Two crumbling towers united by a low wall, a small chapel still retaining its roof, the foundations of the great hall, of the kitchen, and a long suite of apartments, together with traces of the gardens and pleasure grounds, or tilt yard, surrounded by an overgrown terrace, now remain of the once spacious mansion. The ivy and wild elder which cover the ruins, and the stately avenue of chesnuts by which they are approached, give to the whole an appearance of by-gone grandeur.

The mansion was built in the early part of the sixteenth century, by Thomas, Lord Grey, second Marquis of Dorset; and was occupied by his descendants as their chief seat until the beginning of the last century, when, according to

a tradition in the neighbourhood, it was set on fire by the wife of the Earl of Suffolk, at the instigation of her sister. The story is thus told by Throsby :—“ Some time after the Earl had married, he brought his lady to his seat at Bradgate ; her sister wrote to her desiring to know how she liked her habitation and the country she was in. The Countess of Suffolk wrote for answer, ‘ that the house was tolerable, that the country was a forest, and the inhabitants all brutes.’ The sister in consequence, by letter, directed her to ‘ set fire to the house and run away by the light of it.’ ”

The return to Newtown must be by the rocky valley, a romantic glen, down which ripples a sparkling stream.

The great charm however of Bradgate, is its association with one whose brief story, as recorded in the pages of history, has never failed to draw the warm tear of sympathy from every generous heart. The gentle, but ill-fated, Lady Jane Grey was born at Bradgate ; and amid its peaceful haunts were passed her earliest and happiest years. The tragical episode of Lady Jane is too well known to need repetition here. The bright and golden vision of a diadem, which dazzled but to betray, faded in an hour, and left nothing but the headless form of the innocent victim to be an everlasting witness against insatiate ambition.

Bradgate is accessible to the public twice a week.

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#### EXCURSION IV.

##### TO MEASHAM, APPLEBY, GOPSALL, AND BOSWORTH.

TAKING the Tamworth road we shortly pass, on the left, Rotherwood House ; and skirting the belt of oak plantations which girdle the demesne of Willesley, we arrive in about

four miles at the village of Measham. A mile to the left is Measham Hall, the seat of William Wootton Abney, Esq. At the lower end of the village we turn to the left and follow the Atherstone road, passing Snarestone Lodge, the residence of Hampden Clement, Esq.; two miles to the right is the large village of Appleby, where there is an excellent Grammar School, open to all England, founded by Sir John Moore, Knt., in the reign of William III.; the Rev. J. Mould is the present head master. There is here also a very handsome Church; and a commodious Mansion, the abode of George Moore, Esq.

A few miles beyond Appleby, on the Tamworth road, is a singular spot known as No-man's Heath, where the four counties of Leicester, Derby, Stafford, and Warwick, meet in a small plot of ground where each county is shewn by its initial letter within the compass of a few feet. It was formerly a favourite resort for the prize ring gentry, but the neighbouring magistrates have taken active measures to put down the annoyance.

Proceeding on our way, in about five miles we reach the village of Twycross; near which is the entrance to Gopsall, the seat of the Earl Howe. The House, which is a spacious edifice, was built about the year 1750, by the proprietor of the estate, Charles Jennens, Esq., at the cost of £100,000. The principal entrance is on the north side, but the south front presents the most imposing façade; the centre consists of six Corinthian columns of fine proportions, supporting a row of balustrades, behind which there is a receding pediment (part of the wall of the house itself) having a ship in a storm carved in white stone, with a haven in the foreground, and an inscription over the entrance, "Fortiter occupa Portum." The entire length of this front, including the wings, is a hundred and eighty feet. The library is a nobly proportioned room, containing many valuable works. The chapel is fitted

up with cedar, elaborately carved; and the walls of the several apartments are adorned with many choice pictures; amongst them a portrait of Handel, which is peculiarly interesting from the local associations of that great master, who, it is well known, passed much of his time at Gopsall; indeed, beneath its hospitable roof were called forth many of the sublimest efforts of his exalted genius: the whole of "The Messiah" was composed here, and much of "The Israel in Egypt." The gardens occupy nearly ten acres, tastefully laid out; and the park, which is very extensive, is well wooded.

The urbanity, generosity, and Christian sympathy, of the noble owner have surrounded Gopsall with a thriving tenantry and a grateful circle of dependants; hence the whole place presents a most faithful picture of the home of an English Nobleman. Lord Howe has ever formed a just estimate of the reciprocal obligations imposed on the various members of a social community, and has ever discharged his allotted duties on the great principles of "brotherly love, relief, and truth."

About four miles from Gopsall is Market Bosworth, where Sir Alexander Dixie, Bart., has a patrimonial seat. There is also here a well-endowed Grammar School, of which the Rev. Dr. Evans is the head master. Bosworth owes its chief celebrity in the page of history to the great battle fought there, for the Crown of England, which took place on the 22nd of August, 1485, between King Richard III. and Henry, Earl of Richmond, afterwards Henry VII. The most important consequences resulted from the event of this celebrated conflict; for not only did it put an end to the long protracted "wars of the roses," which had for years severed the dearest social bonds, and deluged the land with the blood of its bravest and noblest sons; but at the same time, by creating a new order of things, it struck a fatal blow at the oppressive parts of the feudal system, and opened a new era for

commercial development and the more extensive exercise of rational liberty. The great civil and political changes which took place on the accession of the house of Tudor, caused a veil to be thrown over many past events; and questions have subsequently arisen as to how far the historian has treated with impartial justice the character of Richard. It is certain that the general impressions entertained of the deformed and cruel uncle, the treacherous brother, and the remorseless tyrant, have been chiefly derived from the graphic delineations of Shakspeare.

No stone or monumental trophy was erected to mark the precise spot where the celebrated battle of Bosworth took place, and the site might have been forgotten but for the indefatigable researches of Dr. Parr, who discovered the long choked-up spring called King Richard's Well, which was restored, and the stone covering of which bears a Latin inscription from the pen of the learned Doctor.\*

The area on which the conflicting armies were marshalled on this memorable occasion, is situated in the township of Sutton Cheney, directly between Bosworth and Atherstone; it was known as Redmoor Plain, and is of an oblong form, being about two miles long and one mile broad, and having in the centre a considerable eminence called Ambyon Hill. At the period when this battle was fought the whole country was uninclosed, the measuring chain of the land surveyor was unknown, and the law of trespass was but little acknowledged. In the present day the numerous fences which, with mathematical precision, determine the limits of "meum" and "teum," have so far altered the features of the landscape that it would be difficult even for conjecture to point out

\* The following is a translation,—“Richard the Third, King of England, most eagerly and hotly contending with Henry, Earl of Richmond, and about to lose before night both his sceptre and his life, quenched his thirst with water drawn from this well: August 22nd, 1485.”

the veritable spot where grew the blood-stained heather that witnessed the final struggle of the indomitable monarch, when in his dire emergency he would have bartered his "kingdom for a horse."

The way home may be through the small hamlet of Cadeby. On the left is Odstone, once the property of Bradshaw, the Regicide. On the right is Osbaston Hall, the residence of T. Cope, Esq. Passing through Nailstone we arrive at the populous village of Ibstock, where Archbishop Laud pursued his earlier ministerial labours. From this to Ashby is six miles: the road skirts the villages of Heather, Normanton, and Packington.

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#### EXCURSION V.

##### TO WILLESLEY, STRETTON, CLIFTON, SEALS, MOIRA, AND WOODVILLE.

PASSING the Railway Station, in about half-a-mile we quit the high road, which continues to the left, and shortly arrive at the entrance lodge to Willesley, the seat of Sir Charles Abney Hastings, Bart. This demesne, though not very extensive, comprises many charming spots. A luxuriant park, with an agreeably varied surface; a broad sheet of water, skirted by richly wooded slopes; and a terrace walk, overlooking tasteful and ornamental grounds, are among the principal features. The House, which has recently been much enlarged and decorated, contains a valuable library and some choice paintings, and is replete with every domestic comfort.

Leaving Willesley, and proceeding by a sequestered lane, in about two miles the village of Donisthorpe, where there is a neat church, is passed, and we shortly after reach Stretton Hall, the patrimonial seat of Sir John R. C. Browne-Cave,

Bart. The house, which is a substantial structure, is well situated and is now the abode of Charles R. Colvile, Esq. About a mile from this is Netherseal Hall, the property of Sir Thomas Gresley, Bart., at present occupied by T. C. Geldart, Esq. Three miles from Netherseal is the village of Clifton; the Church has a beautiful spire (from the design of Sir Christopher Wren), forming a most pleasing object in the landscape. H. J. Pye, Esq., has here a delightful residence. The whole of this district, diversified as it is with well-wooded enclosures, undulating pastures, and broad corn fields—with the smoke curling from many a substantial grange and sheltered hamlet—and ever and anon the modest steeple of some village church, or the mimic turrets of some time-honoured manor house, or wealthy squire's ancestral hall, peeping out from amidst the surrounding foliage, presents a tolerably faithful picture of English rural scenery. The distant vista is closed in by a glimpse of the triple-spired Minster of Lichfield.

In returning homewards we pass, on the left, Grangewood House, the seat of T. Mowbray, Esq. It is an extensive and well-appointed mansion. Leaving the village of Overseal, where there is a very handsome Church in strict mediæval taste, we enter on the district of Ashby Woulds, a tract of more than four thousand acres in extent; which at the commencement of the present century was a barren and desolate waste, with scarcely a traversable path across the fens and quagmires: now, however, the landscape is painted over with luxuriant vegetation. Enterprise, capital, and industry have been at work to develope the resources of the soil; while the numerous tall chimneys connected with the extensive coal mines, show that the hidden treasures of the substrata are everywhere being made apparent.

At the eastern boundary of the Woulds we reach the Moira Coal Field; in the deep hollows and crevices and

subterraneous dislocations of which the mineral water supplying the Ashby Baths has its sources. This water many years since flowed out to the surface at a spot about a mile distant, but subsequently, on the opening of works at a lower level in the present mines, the spring disappeared. The method of obtaining the water, and its various medicinal properties, are detailed at page 110.

The shafts at the Moira Colliery are sunk to a depth of more than a thousand feet. Upwards of forty seams of coal, varying in thickness from one inch to five feet, are pierced before reaching the main bed. This is about twelve feet thick; the upper half only is got out. The quality of the coal is excellent; it is very hard; and from its peculiar structure, will long endure exposure to the weather without perishing. It burns with a clear and bright flame, and gives out an intense heat. According to the analysis by Dr. Ure, portions of the main seam contain fully ninety-nine per cent. of purely combustible matter. Between four and five hundred hands are employed in the works, which are carried out on the most improved system of mining. The coal has always found an extensive market, particularly in the lines of the Oxford and Grand Junction Canals; and since the facility for transit afforded by railway communications it is every day becoming more widely diffused.

The colliery is under the management of Mr. John Thomas Woodhouse, the well known and highly esteemed engineer and mineral viewer. This gentleman, who resides about a mile from the works, has, at his own private cost, put up an Electric Telegraph connecting his house with the offices of the colliery. Such instances of individual enterprise are rare, and merit high eulogium.

Baths were erected at Moira soon after the discovery of the saline spring; they are still much frequented: the nearness to the fountain head constituting with many persons a strong

recommendation. There is a well ordered and comfortable hotel and boarding-house for the convenience of visitors.

A curious causeway, called the "Leicester Headland," passes over the Wolds at a short distance from the Moira Baths. It is not discernible on the surface, but portions of the hard materials forming its bed are occasionally turned up by the plough. A short account\* of this *via incognita* is found in Mr. Mammatt's "Geological Facts," a work abounding with interesting information relative to the stratification of this district.

The direct road from Moira to Ashby is about three miles, leaving on the left Norris-Hill House, and on the right Shellbrook House; if, however, it is wished to extend the drive, we may proceed across the Wolds in a north-east direction, and shortly pass a fine sheet of water, forty acres in extent, forming the reservoir to the Ashby Canal, and in about two miles arrive at the hamlet of Woodville; or as it was formerly and is still sometimes called "Wooden-Box." This somewhat quaint cognomen is said to be derived from the circumstance that but a few years since one solitary wood-built hut was the only habitation for miles around, affording shelter to the wayfarer as he tracked his doubtful course athwart the dreary waste. Now, however, the stranger is welcomed by the busy hum of active life from a thriving and populous village, which is daily extending its bounds; and furnishing another proof to the great commercial maxim, that demand creates supply.

\* "A singular pathway, or causeway, called 'Leicester Headland,' runs across the Wolds in a direction nearly east and west, about ten feet wide, and raised throughout with a red clear gravel, which must have been brought from some distance, as no such gravel is found in the neighbourhood. Tradition states that this is part of a road which originally stretched from Leicester to Stapenhill; at which latter place, it is also stated that one of the earliest Christian churches was built, and that burials took place there from Leicester. It may, however, have been a passage from the Abbey at Leicester to that at Burton-upon-Trent."

The whole of the surrounding lands yield valuable beds of fire-clay admirably adapted for making pots, and the manufacture of this important article of commerce is most extensively carried on. Upwards of 18,000 dozens of multiform vessels, from the five-gallon pipkin to the half-ounce mustard pot, are turned out weekly, from the numerous kilns which, with their cone-shaped furnaces, are everywhere dotted over the landscape. The clays, which are found alternating with thin beds of coal, contain a small portion of iron, which gives a yellow colour to the ware, vast quantities of which are exported to all parts of the world; as it is found well calculated for domestic use, combining as it does cheapness with durability. The works of Mr. Thompson, Mr. Brunt, and others, are well worthy of inspection, and the visitor will meet with every attention and civility.

Woodville possesses an extremely neat Church, decorated in purely ecclesiastical taste. This structure, together with the Parsonage House, and Schools to accommodate a hundred children, have been built within the last five years; mainly through the zealous and indefatigable exertions of the Rev. J. B. Sweet, the present Incumbent. The emolument of the cure does not exceed £50 per annum.

The return to Ashby is by an agreeable terrace drive.

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## EXCURSION VI.

TO TICKNALL, KNOWLE HILLS, ANCHOR CHURCH, FOREMARK,  
REPTON, AND BRETBY.

PROCEEDING by the Derby road, we shortly pass the village of Smisby and the Field of the Tournament, to be described in a subsequent Excursion, and descending

the steep escarpment of Pistern Hill, in about four miles we reach the village of Ticknall, where an insulated mass of the mountain lime-stone appears, in horizontal beds, and is burned in considerable quantities for agricultural purposes.

Taking the course of the old road to Derby, in about a mile we pass Knowle Hills; a singular plot of ground, comprising several acres, laid out in terraces rising one above another and diversified with choice trees and shrubs. The terraces are built upon arches, which form a curious subterraneous labyrinth. There are no remains to indicate that any mansion was ever attached to this sequestered plaisir; though some of the walls support grotesque heads and mis-shapen sculptures. It is a favourite resort of pleasure parties, and affords better accommodation for man and horse than is usually met with by the lovers of pic-nics. Near this is Ingleby House, well-situated on a commanding terrace, overlooking the rich valley of the Trent.

Diverging from the high road, in about a mile farther we reach Anchor Church. This singular spot consists of a considerable detached cliff formed of sandy conglomerate, overhanging the water. In the abrupt face of the rock appears a narrow doorway, which admits to several chambers or cells, partly natural, partly artificial; they communicate with each other, and present wild and rudely fashioned outlines. Tradition has assigned this as the abode of some world-forgetting hermit, who preferred solitude, with Trent eels and wild garlic, to all the gay and festive scenes of Lord Mayor's day. The following short idyl on Anchor Church is from the pen of the Rev. John Bagshaw Stevens:

"Romantic Cliff, in Superstition's day,  
Whose chambered rock was scooped by holy hand;  
Where, lost to earth, (as cloister-legends say,)  
His church and cell some woe-worn Anchorite planned.

Yet chose he not a drear, ungenial site ;  
See, o'er that smooth expanse of waters green,  
What giant mountains heave their distant height ;  
While glitters, as he winds, bright Trent between.  
Those lone and rifted towers, that awe the west,  
See, frowning still o'er Mary's regal woes !  
And mark that graceful spire, above the crest  
Of yon fair hill, where Mercia's kings repose.  
Religious Cliff ! forgive, with other view,  
With vow less holy, if our pilgrim-train  
Short sojourn sweet in thy recess renew :—  
Nor deem gay Pleasure's festal rites profane,  
When Beauty's smile divine illumines thy rural reign !”

At a short distance is Foremark Hall, the property of Sir Robert Burdett, Bart.; and now the residence of H. Allsopp, Esq. The house is situated amid wild and beautiful scenery, where wood and rock and stream blend in romantic harmony.

Returning to the high road, and passing through the small hamlet of Milton, we arrive at Repton, still a considerable village. It is a place of great antiquity, and possesses much interest, especially to the lover of the olden times. It is said to have been an important Roman station, and in the middle of the seventh century was recorded as the capital of the kingdom of Mercia, and the burial place of many of the Saxon sovereigns who swayed in that division of the Heptarchy. A Priory existed here from the earliest days; it was destroyed by the Danes, but was restored in the twelfth century by Matilda, wife to Ralph, Earl of Chester; and dedicated to St. Austin, the Holy Trinity, and the Blessed Mary. The monastery, of the order of St. Augustine, and to which the monks from Calke Abbey removed, was liberally endowed; it continued until the period of the dissolution, when it was partially dismantled. The property then passed into the hands of Mr. Thacker: he, according to Fuller, on the accession of Queen Mary not liking the colour

of the times, collected together on a certain Sunday all the carpenters and bricklayers from the neighbourhood, and in a single day utterly demolished one of the most beautiful churches in the land, saying that he would "destroy the nest lest the birds should come back to roost."

The Grammar School, founded by Sir John Port in 1556, was built on the site of the Old Priory; and still retains in its courts and cloisters many monastic mementos. The Archaeological Society visited Repton in 1851, and discovered in the garden attached to the school extensive and interesting fragments of the basement of the Church, and other important portions of the Priory. The School, of which the Rev. Dr. Peile is the head master, is highly esteemed as an ably-conducted educational establishment; it is free to the immediate neighbourhood, and has eight scholars on the foundation, with several Exhibitions.

At the lower end of the village stands the Church, a handsome structure, with an elegant spire two hundred feet high. Tradition says that three churches have succeeded each other on the same spot. The present building was probably erected at different periods, as shown by the internal architecture. There are several good monuments; and underneath the chancel is a curious Crypt, supported on two rows of Saxon columns, having wreathed capitals. Two winding passages conduct into the church; and it is said a subterranean communication exists between this and Anchor Church, two miles distant. The crypt is of the same character with that of St. Peter's-in-the-East, Oxford, and Canterbury Cathedral; and it is probably referrible to the same epoch, namely, the age of Grymbald, one of the first professors at Oxford in Alfred's reign.

A gigantic skeleton was discovered near Repton, a century and a half since. Sir Simon Degge, in the year 1727, collected as many circumstances respecting this discovery as he could,

and communicated them to the Royal Society. "Having viewed," says he, "the ruins at Repton, or Rependon-on-the-Trent, and enquiring for antiquities, the inhabitants brought us Thomas Walker, a labourer, eighty-eight years old, who gave us the following account:—About forty years since, cutting hillocks near the surface, he met with an old stone wall; when, clearing further, he found it to be a square enclosure of fifteen feet. It had been covered; but the top was decayed and fallen in, being only supported by wooden joists. In this he found a stone coffin; and with difficulty removing the cover saw the skeleton of a human body nine feet long, and round it one hundred skeletons of the ordinary size, laid with the feet pointing to the stone coffin! The head of the great skeleton he gave to Mr. Bowes, master of the free school. I enquired of his son, one of the present masters, concerning it; but it is lost; yet he says, he remembers the skull in his father's closet, and that he had often heard his father mention this gigantic corpse, and thinks that the skull was in proportion to a body of that stature. The bottom of this dormitory was covered with broad flat stones, and in the wall was a door-case with steps to go down to it, whose entrance was forty yards nearer the church and river. The steps and stone were much worn. 'Tis in a close on the north side of the church; and over this repository grows a sycamore tree, planted by the old man, when he filled in the earth. The present owner will not suffer it to be opened, the lady of the manor having forbidden it. This was attested to us by several old persons, who had seen and measured the skeleton."

Returing home, we pass on the left Repton Park, the residence of Edmund Crewe, Esq.; and in about three miles reach the entrance lodge to Bretby, the seat of the Earl of Chesterfield. This demesne is not open to the public, but those fortunate enough to obtain from the noble owner the

privilege of entrée will be charmed by the ride through a delightful park, richly diversified with varied objects of interest. Our way continues through the village of Harts-horne, and at the toll-gate joins the road from Woodville.

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## EXCURSION VII.

TO STAUNTON HAROLD, MELBOURNE, CALKE, AND SMISBY.

FOLLOWING the same road as in the first Excursion and proceeding nearly three miles, we then turn to the left, and shortly arrive at Staunton Harold, the seat of Earl Ferrers. The house is a large and handsome edifice, built and designed by Washington, fifth Earl Ferrers. It is situated in a beautiful valley, with a fine hanging wood at the back, and contrasted in the distance by a wild heath and a variety of pleasing scenery. The principal front, to the south-east, is in the style of Palladio, and is ornamented with a pediment (surmounted with three stone figures at its angles) supported by Ionic pillars, which are upheld by Doric columns. The whole centre of this front is built of stone, and the other parts of brick ornamented with stone. The south-west front is very extensive, built in the form of a Roman H, and surmounted in the centre by the statue of a large lion. On the north-east is the library front, originally designed by Inigo Jones, and nearly preserved in the present structure. The view from this side is extremely good; the lake which runs in front of the building here takes a winding course, bounded on either side by a sloping eminence crowned with stately forest trees; whilst the minor shrubs shooting towards the verge of the water, present a *coup d'œil* the most striking.

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When the house was pulled down for the erection of the present building, the Gate of the old Hall was left standing. Its beauty and elaborate workmanship acted as a charmed safeguard from the hands of the destroyer, and it was preserved as an ornament to the grounds. As a specimen of the taste displayed by our ancestors in this peculiar walk of design, at the time of its erection, it is, perhaps, the most beautiful in England. The gates are formed of light ornamental iron-work, and the supporting pillars, animals, &c., of stone. The workmanship is most elaborately finished, yet solidity and grandeur are not lost sight of; while the wreathed pillars (which bring to mind Raphael's cartoon and the beautiful gate of the Jewish temple,) give a lightness and grace to the whole, at once strikingly picturesque. It can never fail in delighting the spectator, viewed only as a work of art; while on the antiquary it will have a double claim, in the pleasure he would feel at its being thus preserved from destruction.

The Lake is a fine sheet of water, covering a space of between twenty and thirty acres, at the upper end of which is a pool of about seven acres, called the Church Pool, and at the lower end of this is a handsome stone bridge, forming an approach to the house. On the verge of the lake, within a short distance of the hall, is a most beautiful Gothic Chapel, with a well-proportioned tower, built in 1653 by the celebrated Sir Robert Shirley, "who did the best of things in the worst of times, and hoped them in the most calamitous." This inscription in stone encircles the tower of the church. Sir Robert in the civil war raised his people, and marched to the succour of General Hastings, then besieged in Ashby Castle by Cromwell's troops; being defeated and his men dispersed, he was taken prisoner and sent to the Tower of London, where he died. To reward in some degree the services of the family, King Charles II. on his restoration created his son Lord Ferrers of Chartley.

The body of the church consists of a nave, and two aisles, separated by three arches, over which are clerestory windows; there is also a very handsome chancel, parted from the nave by elegantly wrought iron gates, on which are the Ferrers' arms, supporters, and coronet. The chancel is paved with marble, and the ascent to the altar is by three steps. The communion-table and chairs are curious specimens of early carving; the gilt communion-plate is remarkably fine, ancient, and costly, and was given to the church by its founder. The font is plain. The organ, which is the production of the celebrated Father Schmidt, is fine-toned and melodious. The funeral trophies of knights are hung up in different parts of the church, consisting of the helmet, tunic, sword, shield, and spurs, in the same style as those over the knights' stalls in St. George's Chapel, Windsor. The whole interior of this beautiful church (dedicated to the Holy Trinity,) is richly ornamented with carved paneling, raised lozenge work, and bands of flowers. The exterior of the building is very chaste and beautiful; and the thick mantling of ivy adds to its general effect. The windows of the tower, and the lower range of windows in the body of the church, are in the pointed style, with mullions and rich tracery. The park was anciently very large; it was disparked by Washington, Earl Ferrers, and now comprises about one hundred and fifty acres, well stocked with deer.

Leaving Staunton, in about three miles we arrive at the large and populous village of Melbourne, where a considerable manufactory of silk and woollen goods is carried on. The two principal objects of interest are the Church and the Gardens. The ancient Church, or rather the ancient portion of the building, consists of the western front or façade, the nave with its clerestory, the transept, and the lower part of the tower; the upper part, as well as the side aisles and the chancel, being comparatively recent.

Tradition points to the spot as an ecclesiastical site of remote antiquity : the ancient portion of the existing church belongs, however, to the earlier and heavier period of what is usually termed the Norman style. The effect of the massive piers, columns, and arches, on entering by the south transept, cannot fail to be striking, even to a spectator who may be little curious or but slightly versed in ecclesiastical architecture. The antiquary, however, will find no lack of details for careful examination ; and, while he surveys the realities of the noble remnant, may exercise his fancy in restoring to their former completeness and dignity the unplastered front, the once high-pitched roof, and the vanished choir.

The Hall, which is the property of Viscount Melbourne, is only remarkable as a comfortable dwelling-house, but the Gardens are peculiar. The visitor is admitted, through a somewhat uninviting approach, to a broad terrace, adorned with varied parterres of flowers and choice shrubs, and commanding a charming prospect over a fine sheet of water and the surrounding richly-wooded uplands. A wide flight of steps conduct to a green lawn, from which numerous paths diverge into umbrageous avenues formed by closely-entwined yew hedges, which frequently unite in an embowering arch. Ever and anon some bright fountain throws up its sparkling waters to meet the gladsome sunbeam, contrasting happily with the sombre tints around ; while here and there appear groups of statues characterizing the wood nymphs and water sprites. There is a lonely grotto, a magic well, and a fairy pavilion ; indeed the *tout ensemble* is quaint and unique. It is a curious specimen (and very few now remain) of the ancient style of pleasure ground. It is a favourite resort for pleasure parties during the summer.

There was formerly a castle at Melbourne, in which John, Duke of Bourbon, who was taken at the battle of Agincourt, was for many years imprisoned. The site is now scarcely

discernible.—There was also a palace belonging to the Bishops of Carlisle, but this has been removed.

A mile from Melbourne is King's Newton Hall, an ancient mansion in the Elizabethan style. It is the property of Lord Melbourne, and now the residence of Robert Green, Esq. King Charles II. was entertained here by Sir Robert Hardinge, Knt.; when, after his majesty's departure, some writing was discovered on a pane of stained glass, and signed *Carlos Newton Regis*—hence the name.

Returning by a somewhat different route, we pass Calke Park, the demesne of Sir John Harpur Crewe, Bart. The house, or, as it is called, the *Abbey*, is a noble mansion, situated in a valley surrounded by a well-wooded park of about three hundred acres, plentifully stocked with an excellent breed of fallow deer. The house is built of fine freestone, round a quadrangular court; it is large and elegant. In the centre of the south front two flights of steps lead to the portico, the pediment of which is supported by four Ionic columns.

Quitting Calke, we shortly pass on the left a curious little valley called Dimsdale, where lead mines are worked to some extent; continuing on, the road skirts a considerable wood called South Wood, and, toiling up a steep ascent, we gain the ridge of Pistern Hill, from which a very magnificent view is obtained of portions of Nottingham and Derby and the forest hills of Charnwood.

A mile further is the village of Smisby; and on the right, is the field which common consent has assigned as the site of the celebrated Tournament described in "Ivanhoe." Previously to the publication of that charming novel, which has shed around Ashby an enduring halo, its gifted author was staying with Sir George Beaumont at Coleorton, and in all probability visited the whole of the locality; indeed the descriptions of the area of the lists and of the lane traversed

by Gurth on his return from Isaac the Jew, are too graphic to be considered the result of mere coincidence.

The period when this gentle passage of arms was held, and how far it may be proved to have been coeval with the Castle, are questions of legendary lore; but the master wizard of Abbotsford, from his lofty seat above the crags of Parnassus, might well be enabled to look back into the vista of time and re-produce on the beautiful mirror of fancy which lay before him, those dim and shadowy outlines of past events which were lost to the gaze of the matter-of-fact historian. Be it as it may, the vivid colouring of romance will long rest upon Ashby; and the traditions of the nineteenth century will continue to associate it with some of the fairest creations of a glowing ideality. It is needless to add, that the trophies and relics of the tourney professed to be found on the spot, are altogether apocryphal.











